

## A large bronze statue of a samurai warrior on horseback, holding a torch aloft, with two oxen at his feet. The statue is set against a clear blue sky and green foliage. The warrior is depicted in full armor, including a helmet and a breastplate, and is seated on a horse. He holds a long pole with a torch at the top in his right hand. Two oxen are positioned at the base of the statue, one on the left and one on the right, both facing towards the center. The entire sculpture is made of dark bronze and is mounted on a rocky base.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**STEPHEN TURNBULL** took his first degree at Cambridge University, and received a PhD from Leeds University for his work on Japanese religious history. He has travelled extensively in Europe and the Far East and also runs a well-used picture library. His work has been recognised by the awarding of the Canon Prize of the British Association for Japanese Studies and a Japan Festival Literary Award. He currently divides his time between lecturing in Japanese Religion at the University of Leeds and writing.



Battle Orders • 36

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# Samurai Armies 1467–1649



Stephen Turnbull

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## Dedication

In memory of my mother, Joyce Turnbull 1913–2007, life's greatest teacher.



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# Introduction

The choice of the years between 1467 and 1649 as the time span for this book needs a brief explanation. Essentially it encompasses the Sengoku Period, the time of Japan's great civil wars, but extends it beyond conventional dating. The term literally means 'The Age of Warring States', and is an expression borrowed from Ancient Chinese history. It is conventionally regarded as beginning in 1467, the year of the start of the disastrous Onin War, but it is the choice of year by which it 'officially' ends that is somewhat arbitrary. The year 1568, when Oda



Hôjô Soun (1432–1519), the archetypal daimyô of the early Sengoku Period. This equestrian statue of him wearing a monk's headdress is outside Odawara station. He has a general's tasseled war fan in his hand, and is accompanied by a herd of stampeding oxen, a stratagem he used when he captured Odawara, the future capital of the Hôjô, in 1495.

Nobunaga, the first of the three unifiers of Japan, entered Kyōto in triumph, is one possibility. In 1591 his successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi also seemed to have brought a century and a half of conflict to an end, but the subsequent Korean invasion, Hideyoshi's death and the battle of Sekigahara in 1600 ensured that much more fighting was to take place. The siege of Osaka in 1615 is another possible point of closure, but the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637–38 was to provide warfare on a disturbing scale for the triumphant Tokugawa family. However, in 1649 the schedule for supplying troops to the Tokugawa army received its final revision, and as this effectively marked the end of the period of evolution of samurai armies it provides the closing date for this work.

The pre-modern provinces of Japan.





These two hundred years of conflict involved a series of civil wars, sometimes connected to each other, more frequently not. For most of the time, therefore, it is impossible to talk about the 'Japanese Army' in a way analogous to, say, the 'Roman Army' under a particular Roman emperor, because warfare was conducted by a widely different array of individual samurai armies, each of them loyal to a particular daimyō (feudal warlord) and reflecting his own idiosyncrasies. Only at the very end of the period do we find anything resembling a national army. This belonged to the triumphant Tokugawa family, and represented in every way the final development of samurai armies. This 'Japanese Army' was well organized, well equipped, and so successful at keeping the peace that it fought almost no battles until Japan entered the modern world.

## The historical context

The Sengoku Period may have been an age of war, but Japan had been no stranger to conflict since the beginning of its recorded history, having been involved in continental expeditions to Korea in addition to its own domestic disputes. By the 11th century AD the armies fielded by Japanese commanders had developed from being a conscript force on the contemporary Chinese model to the employment of what were virtually private armies of samurai, the familiar word for a Japanese knight.

An important stage in the development of Japanese warfare was reached with the Gempei War of 1180–85. Two major samurai clans, the Taira and the Minamoto, fought each other for the position of who controlled the emperor, and ended their conflict with the emperor being relegated to a secondary function in favour of the Shogun or military dictator. The original Shoguns from the Minamoto family did not last long, and a civil war during the 14th century placed the Shogunate into the hands of the Ashikaga family, who ruled until 1568. The Ashikaga shoguns followed a policy of decentralization, so that military governors or shugo ruled the provinces of Japan on their behalf in a system of mutual support that worked well until the mid-15th century.

The collapse of Shogunal authority began in 1467, when a dispute over the succession to the Shogunate led to a number of prominent shugo taking opposing sides and resorting to violence. The incumbent shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1435–90), was powerless to control them, and suffered the indignity of witnessing fighting in the streets of Kyōto, Japan's capital. These disturbances proved to be the beginning of a long civil war known as the Onin War, which lasted from 1467 to 1477. Kyōto was devastated and the fighting soon spread to the provinces, ushering in the long time of conflict that is known as the Sengoku Period. As the Shogunate had been exposed as a weak entity that could be either manipulated or even ignored, erstwhile shugo took the opportunity to create petty kingdoms for themselves in the provinces they had formerly administered. These men were the first daimyō – literally 'the great names' – and differed from the shugo who had preceded them in one crucial aspect. Because their domains had not been bestowed upon them by the Shogun they lacked any viable external source of legitimacy or security, not that any of them expected any guarantee of the latter beyond that which was provided by their own swords. The emperor and Shogun still remained in Kyōto as symbols of ultimate authority and sovereignty, but after the death of Yoshimasa the Shogun possessed neither the power nor the prestige to impose upon a province a master who was not already established there as the local ruler. Nevertheless some daimyō, particularly smaller ones, still clung to the legitimacy that previous appointments had given them, even though it was by military force alone that they had ousted their predecessor.

The word used for the territory a daimyō controlled as a mini-state was *kokka*, a contiguous geographical unit that often bore no relationship to the traditional borders of the Japanese *kuni* (provinces), and was defined simply by what could be defended. A *kokka* was constructed from the inside outwards,



and consisted of a composite of separate fiefs either held directly by the daimyō or indirectly by his followers, for whom the European term 'vassal' is customarily employed. This terminology will be discussed more precisely later. At the core of the kokka was a hierarchy of military alliances around the powerful central figure of the daimyō. Traditionally, a daimyō's primary reliance was upon his kinsmen, but as the Sengoku Period proceeds we see an ever-increasing reliance on vassalage as a cohesive force.

Within their kokka the daimyō ruled liked petty princes, but not all daimyō were the noble samurai aristocrats they appeared to be. Japan may have been a land where pedigree and breeding mattered, but in the confusion of the times swords and samurai counted for more than names on ancestral scrolls. Some daimyōs' ancestors were as likely to have been farmers or umbrella makers as glorious samurai, and the present head of a family may well have risen to that dizzy height by murdering his former master. As for prestigious names, some old established ones disappeared forever, while new ones could easily be created by opportunistic warriors. A good example is provided by the Hōjō family of Odawara. Their founder, Ise Nagauji, was skilled in war but of modest background, so he appropriated a new surname from the long extinct samurai lineage of the Hōjō because it sounded impressive.

The daimyō appear to have spent a great deal of time creating alliances and breaking them, and less time fighting each other, a balance of activities that had more to do with the seasons and the demands of agriculture than their personal ambitions. Yet warfare was always their most important means of expansion, and once his domains were seen to be internally strong a daimyō could begin pushing his ambitions to wider limits. In the area around modern Tokyo the Hōjō, Uesugi and Takeda clashed in a long series of conflicts that historians have likened to the Three Kingdoms Period of Chinese history. The southern Japanese island of Kyūshū witnessed a similar rivalry between the samurai who fought under the flags of Shimazu, Ito, Otomo and Ryūzōji, while the Mōri family steadily increased their influence along the Inland Sea at the expense of the Amako and clashed with their neighbours the Ukita. On Shikoku the Chōsokabe grew to dominate the island, and in the far north of Japan the Date, Hatakeyama and Ashina competed for control.

In all the above examples the concept of the kokka gradually grew from being merely province-wide to being region-wide. By the 1550s this process was well under way, and the chaos that had attended the immediate aftermath of the Onin War had long been replaced by competition between large and well-ordered domains. Gone, for example, were the 200 tiny mountaintop castles of Bizen province that had served the local petty warlords. In their place stood mighty Okayama castle, built on the fertile Kibi plain by the province's sole daimyō Ukita Naoie and linked to a handful of other strategic fortresses.

In 1568 the notion of the kokka first acquired a national dimension. In that year Oda Nobunaga (1534–82) entered Kyōto to make the emperor and the Shōgun bend to his will. Using a combination of superb generalship, utter ruthlessness and a willingness to embrace new military technology such as European firearms Nobunaga began the process of reunification of Japan. His attempt did not last long, because Nobunaga was killed when Akechi Mitsuhide, one of his subordinate generals, launched a surprise night attack on him in 1582. Mitsuhide had taken advantage of the absence from the scene of nearly all

Date Masamune, the daimyō of Sendai, is shown here in a hanging scroll in full battle array with face mask and his personal sashimono flag of a red rising sun on a white background.







An important stage in the rise to power of Ukita Naoie came when he consolidated his power at Okayama castle, built beside a river in the fertile plains rather than from a mountain-top yamashiro. This showed that he had strategic vision rather than just the ability to win battles.

his fellow generals, but one of them, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98), hurried back from a distant campaign to trounce Mitsuhide at the battle of Yamazaki. Basking in the honour of being the loyal avenger of his dead master, Hideyoshi hurried to establish himself in the power vacuum that Nobunaga's death had created. In a series of brilliant campaigns Hideyoshi either eliminated or thoroughly neutralized any potential rivals, including Nobunaga's surviving sons and brothers. Over the next five years Hideyoshi conducted campaigns that gave him the islands of Shikoku and Kyūshū, and when the daimyō of northern Japan pledged allegiance to him in 1591 Japan was finally reunified.

Unfortunately for Hideyoshi, his ambitions did not stop at Japan, and in 1592 he sent tens of thousands of samurai across the sea in an invasion of Korea. The invading army, the first military force that could be regarded in any way as 'the Japanese army', met with disaster. A second attempt was made in 1597, but when Hideyoshi died in 1598 the samurai were recalled, and Japan looked as though it was going to slip back into the chaos from which Hideyoshi had rescued it. His son and heir Hideyori was only five years old, but when war broke out the matter was quickly resolved at the decisive battle of Sekigahara in 1600. The victor, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), could trace his ancestry back to the Minamoto, and was therefore able to restore the Shogunate. Ieyasu was proclaimed Shogun in 1603, and the final remnants of the supporters of Toyotomi Hideyori were defeated at the siege of Osaka castle in 1614–15. Apart from the short-lived Shimabara Rebellion of 1637–38, the Sengoku Period was over. The triumph of the Tokugawa family finally provided a period of stability, and with their samurai army behind them they were to rule Japan with a rod of iron until the mid-19th century, when the arrival of foreign voyagers and traders forced Japan to enter the modern world.



# Kinsmen and vassals

## Soldiers and fortune

The Age of Warring States was true to its name, ever plagued by conflicts that grew larger and more frequent, and as the creation of armies was carried out in a situation of civil war it is not surprising that they differed greatly from one lord to another. No single daimyō typifies the age as a whole. All had different ways of ruling their domains and organizing their armies, even if the essential functions of a daimyō – to be supreme commander, ruler, administrator and dynastic chief – can be readily identified in any example. One further characteristic to be found throughout Japan for the entire age was the uncertainty of daimyō fortune. Some daimyō, even ones who had once been innovators in vassal organization or military technology, blossomed for a while and then died out at the hands of others. Chōsokabe Motochika (1539–99), whose conquest of the island of Shikoku was initially threatened by his shaky knowledge of geography beyond the scrap of territory where he had spent his entire life, was to spend 25 years acquiring an empire and one month losing it. Luckier daimyō survived and prospered, and because the successful ones tended to leave behind the best records of their achievements and their organization, it is their armies and their victories that will feature most prominently in the pages that follow. The greatest emphasis of all, of course, will be upon the development of the Tokugawa army as it evolved through battles and politics from being the military force of a minor daimyō to becoming effectively the national army of Japan.

## The creation of a kashindan

Everything about samurai armies – their size, organization, weaponry, deployment and activity – depended upon the individual daimyō, and the way that those aspirations were channelled into making an effective fighting force began with the daimyō's family or clan. Through a complex mechanism of obligations, which took into account the relationship of an individual to the head of the family by birth, marriage or adoption, and by further tiers of hereditary vassalage or submission following defeat, samurai armies were created. There were powerful Confucian ideals here, a religious philosophy that valued an ordered, hierarchical society where a lord received loyalty from his followers just as a father would receive filial piety from a son, and responded to it by kindness and benevolence.

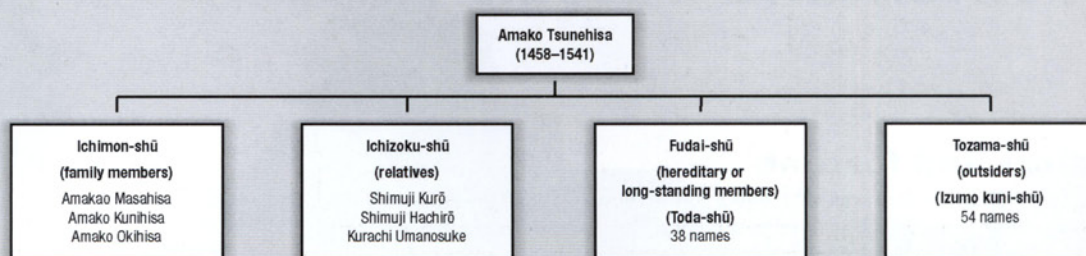
In military terms this benevolence from above, often expressed by a generous grant of lands for service in past wars, was reciprocated by the supply of troops to the daimyō's army for service in future ones. In this the system paralleled the lord/vassal relationship in European feudalism, although many brushes have been drained of ink in an attempt to show the wide differences between the Japanese system and the European concept. For our purposes it is sufficient to note that the kashin (the 'vassal' or 'retainer' – the latter expression simply indicating a samurai whose service was retained for use by the daimyō) supplied troops when the daimyō required them according to the retainer's own income to make up the daimyō's kashindan (retainer band), otherwise known as his gundan (warband). A vassal's wealth was realized through the taxation of his lands, and when combined with the revenue generated by the much larger holdings of the daimyō's own family, made up the total wealth of the domain and provided the financial basis on which a daimyō could go to war and risk losing everything.

A hanging scroll showing Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, with his golden fan o uma jirushi (standard) and his helmet.

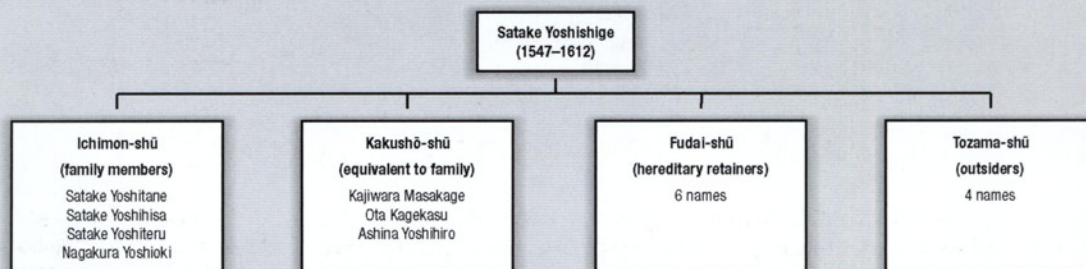




### The kashindan of the Amako family



### The kashindan of the Satake family



The Amako and Satake families provide two simple examples of a daimyō's kashindan (retainer band) that is subdivided in terms of personal relationships rather than function. Amako Tsunehisa differentiates between his immediate family and other relatives, together with his 'inner' and 'outer' retainers. Satake Yoshishige has a separate category for his generals who are regarded as being equivalent to family members.

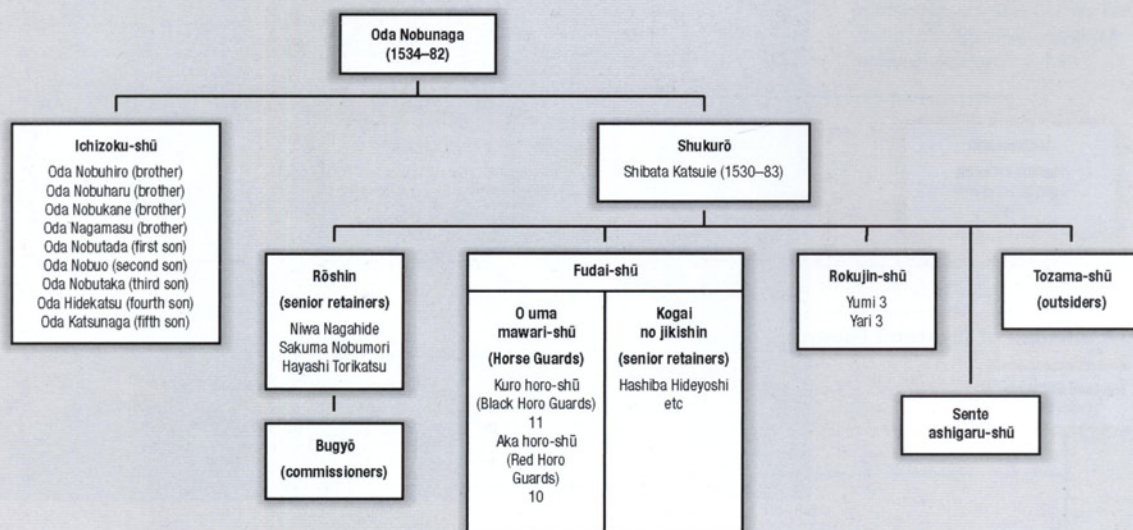
Closest of all to the daimyō were his blood relatives, identified by the expressions *ichimon*, *kamon*, *ichizoku* or *shōke*, all of which can be translated as 'kinsmen'. Adoption of sons allowed the entry of allies into the family or the control of other families by placing one's own kinsmen therein, but in many families the swearing of oaths of vassalage was often considered a more trustworthy bond than either kinship or adoption. In some cases all branch families were treated strictly as vassals. By 1532, for example, the Mōri family's kashindan was based entirely on the submission of oaths of allegiance, with the ultimate sanction for betrayal being a punishment by the *kami* (the gods of Japan), as in the following oath from Satsuma province, which ends with the words:

If these statements be false, let the punishment of  
The Tenshō Daijingu of Ise  
The Daigongen of the Three Kumano [shrines]  
The Daibosatsu of Nitta Hachiman  
The Temman Daijizai Tenjin and  
The Daimyōjin of Upper and Lower Suma be visited upon me.

Although vassal structures differed somewhat from daimyō to daimyō, much of the terminology used was common to all, so that within the kashindan the daimyō's personal retainers were usually called his *kinju*. Some *kinju* were the daimyō's *koshō*, a role akin to the European notion of a page or a squire. These were young men trained from boyhood in the daimyō's household. Senior kashin would also have had their own personal followers, often called *tomo*, who fought beside them on the battlefield.

The long-standing hereditary retainers of a daimyō were known as his *fudai* (inner lords). Other vassals from within the area of the *kokka* made up the *kuni-shū* (provincial units), but there was always another class of vassals usually called *tozama* (outsiders). Their outsider status had little to do with geography

## The kashindan of Oda Nobunaga c. 1570



and everything to do with politics, because they would have submitted to the daimyō only after some major turning point in his career. Some may even have played off one daimyō against another to see who won, or simply 'sat on the fence' until the issue of supremacy was settled on the battlefield. Their outsider status reflected the fact that the daimyō's kashindan had already taken shape by the time they came on to the scene, so they were not always entirely trusted. The classic example is the use of the term *tozama* after the battle of Sekigahara for the daimyō who had opposed Tokugawa Ieyasu.

A daimyō's vassal structure represented a peacetime organization that became his army in wartime, but these structures were not rigid systems. Retainers might be killed in battle or just died of old age. New followers were often acquired, prompting changes both in structure and function. As a result any diagram showing a vassal structure represents only a snapshot in time of a dynamic entity. This is particularly true of the complex and ever-changing organizations controlled by the great unifiers Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu.

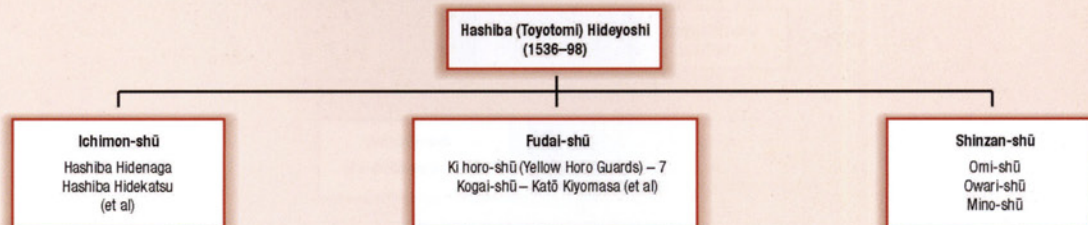
Some daimyō identified their vassal structures entirely in terms of personal relationships, usually subdividing them into the above categories of *ichimon*, *fudai*, *tozama* and *kuni-shū*, while others made more of the military functions the vassals carried out, making their vassal structures into a shorthand version of their resulting armies. We usually find an elite group called variously *karō*, *rōshin* or *shukurō* (elders or senior vassals) who were drawn from the daimyō's family or from his most powerful vassals and used as an inner council for administration and military policy. In times of war the two crucial roles of *bugyō* (military administrators) and *taishō* (generals in command of fighting divisions) were performed by the *karō* within the daimyō's *hatamoto* (literally 'under the standard'), the household troops directly accountable to him.

Two simple examples of vassal structures with no reference to any actual military or administrative function appear in the diagram on page 10. The Amako were a successful daimyō family during the early Sengoku Period under Amako Tsunehisa (1458-1541) until they clashed with the rising fortunes of Mōri Motonari (1497-1571). The family members are divided into *ichimon* (all of whom bear the surname Amako) and *ichizoku* who do not. There are 38 names in the *fudai* category (also known as the *Toda-shū*) and 68 *tozama*, the *Izumo kuni-shū*, or 'the unit from Izumo Province'. Towards

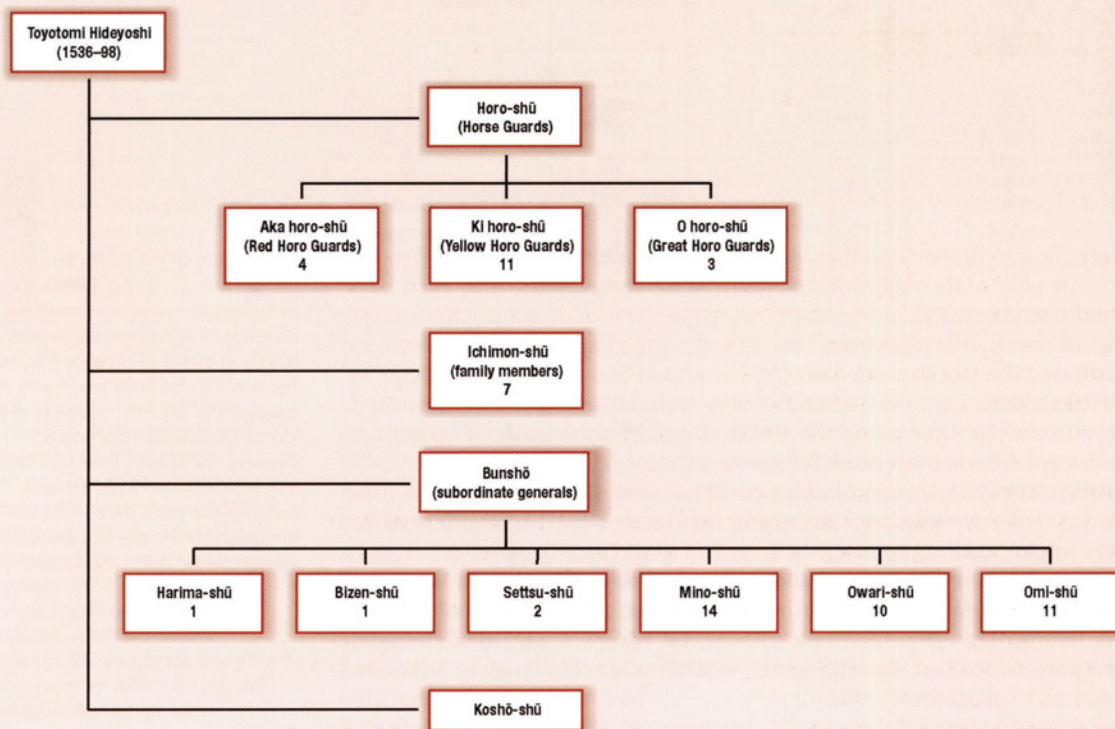
By the time of the battle of Anegawa in 1570 Oda Nobunaga commanded a complex structure of vassal relationships, expressed largely in terms of military function. From within his *fudai* are drawn the members of his two troops of elite Horse Guards and the *koshō* ('squires' or 'pages') who had served him from boyhood. His *ashigaru* come under separate command for spears, bows and the front-line *ashigaru* with their arquebuses.



### The kashidan of Toyotomi Hideyoshi c. 1573



### The kashidan of Toyotomi Hideyoshi c. 1581



As Hideyoshi grew to power his vassal band experienced a commensurate growth in numbers. On taking command of Nagahama castle in 1573 his structure was a simple version of that of his master Oda Nobunaga, with his own troop of Horse Guards wearing yellow horo (cloaks) and his squires. By 1571 two more troops of Horse Guards have been created, and the former tozama have become his loyal subordinate generals, referred to according to their provinces.

the end of the Sengoku Period the followers of the Satake family under Satake Yoshishige (1547–1612) and his son Yoshinobu (1570–1633), who inherited his father's domains in 1590, were organized into four groups: ichimon, fudai, tozama and a category called the kakushō-shū, defined as 'a general subordinate to the commander but on the footing of an honoured guest'. The three names in this section are Ashina Yoshihiro, the second son of Satake Yoshishige who was adopted into the Ashina family, and the two sons of Yoshishige's ally Ota Sukemasa.

Oda Nobunaga, the first of the three unifiers of Japan, presents a different organisation, of which the 1570 structure is shown in the diagram on page 11. The core of Nobunaga's kashidan consisted of those who joined him when he achieved absolute power within his native province of Owari. Nobunaga's subsequent conquest of Mino, completed when he captured Inabayama (Gifu) in 1567, depended only partly upon military victory, because the growth in his kashidan at this time came about when minor lords of Mino simply abandoned the Saitō in his favour, a process that calls into question the popular



This nicely observed waxwork in Kokura castle shows a daimyō sitting with members of his karō (elders). To his right a koshō (page) holds the daimyō's sword.

notion of samurai pledging undying loyalty to their daimyō. Nor did Nobunaga illustrate the other popular misconception about samurai warfare by slaughtering his defeated opponents. Instead the retainers of the defeated and therefore almost inevitably dead daimyō were adopted wholesale into his kashindan. Most of these new vassals were placed under the command of existing commanders, a status known as yoriki. Yoriki is also sometimes used to identify senior samurai, although within the Chōsokabe, among others, the practice was to call them yoriko ('children') serving under yoriōya ('parents'), a terminology that neatly summarizes the relationship.

The 1570 Oda structure shows that Nobunaga kept his ichimon directly accountable to himself, while delegating the command of his other vassals through one single shukuro, Shibata Katsuie (1530–83). Under Katsuie served the three rōshin, who had command of the bugyō. There was also a unit known as the kogai no jikishin, an expression that literally means 'direct vassals brought up from childhood'. Some fell into this category because they had acted as koshō (pages or squires) to Nobunaga from their childhood, while Hashiba (later Toyotomi) Hideyoshi had joined Nobunaga as a young man. Other generals had command of the specialized ashigaru (foot soldier) weapon units.

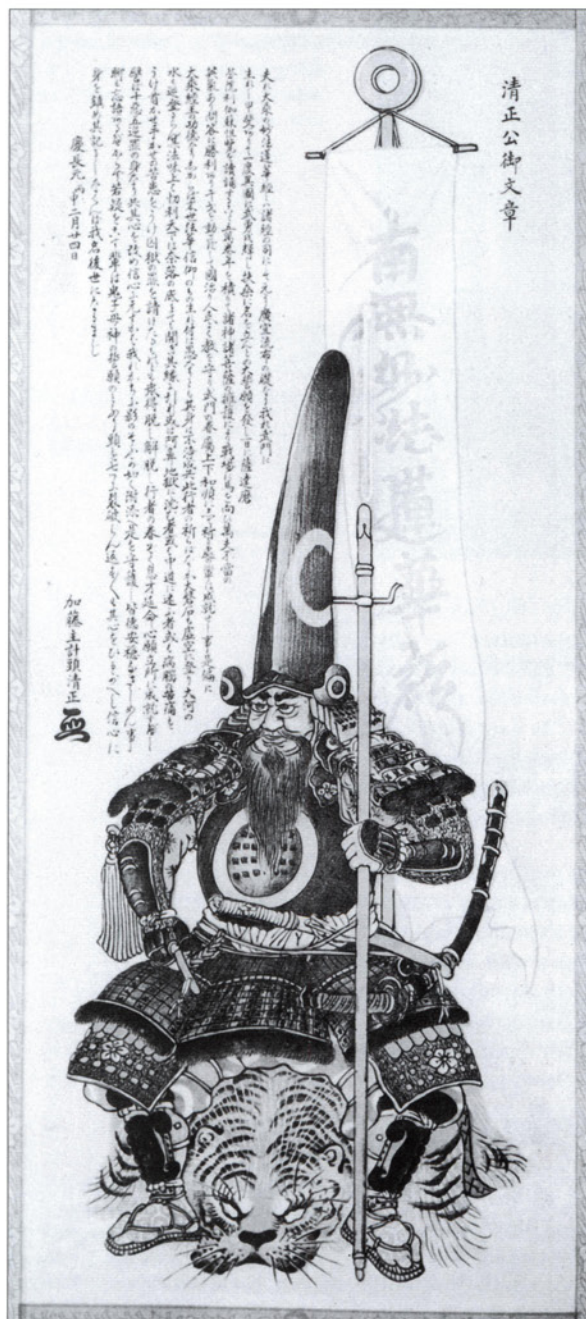
Shibata Katsuie also headed up the o uma mawari-shū (Horse Guards). In about 1568 Nobunaga selected 20 men to create two elite 'troops', the black horo unit and the red horo unit, so named from the colour of the horo, the ornamental cloak that they wore. Their military role will be described more fully later, but the Horse Guards obviously enjoyed a unique social status as shown by a bizarre account of a New Year reception Nobunaga held in 1574. After dismissing his ordinary retainers, Nobunaga continued with a second party for his elite Horse Guards, whose saké drinking was enlivened by a private viewing of the severed heads of the Asai and Asakura daimyō, nicely presented with an attractive coating of gold paint.

The diagram on page 12 provides two 'snapshots' of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's own kashindan as it grew during his rise to power. The first shows it as it was when he took over Nagahama castle in 1573 following the fall of the Asai family. His kashindan's structure is very similar to that of his overlord Oda Nobunaga. Having risen from the rank of ashigaru (foot soldier) by his own merits Hideyoshi has no hereditary fudai, but he has his own Horse Guards who wear yellow horo, and there is a group of koshō similar to Nobunaga's kogai no jikishin called the kogai-shū. This includes the eleven-year-old Kato Kiyomasa (1562–1611), whom Hideyoshi had brought up from infancy.

A sketch by Sasama showing a samurai wearing an extra-large horo. This size of horo is implied for Toyotomi Hideyoshi's o horo-shū in his Horse Guards.







Shown here in later life with his characteristic cross-bladed spear and a full set of whiskers, Katō Kiyomasa was from boyhood a member of Hideyoshi's kogai-shū, the unit of pages or squires in Hideyoshi's hatamoto.

Hideyoshi's other category are the equivalent of tozama and are known as his shinzan-shū (newcomers). They are divided by province as the Omi-shū, the Mino-shū and the Owari-shū.

Within a few years the kashindan has grown to the form shown for 1581, the time when Hideyoshi was conducting his campaigns along the Inland Sea. The most noticeable change is that the newcomers are no longer new, and are now referred to as the bunshō (subordinate generals), their numbers having been swelled from the other provinces that Hideyoshi has acquired. He has also increased the numbers of his bodyguard. The Yellow Horo Guards have now been augmented by the Red Horo Guards and the Great Horo Guards. The latter, also known as the uchiwa-shū (war fan unit) probably wore extra large horo of about 1.5m in diameter.

After Nobunaga's death in 1582 Hideyoshi's influence grew rapidly, but it was an advancement he had to fight for and secure. His main opponents were not Nobunaga's former enemies but his own former colleagues within Nobunaga's kashindan. Once they had been dealt with Hideyoshi's vassal band multiplied as more defeated daimyō, who commanded armies as large as Hideyoshi's had once been, pledged oaths of allegiance to him and became loyal followers. By this time the notion of a kashindan had grown far beyond the original meaning, and the records for Hideyoshi's advance eastwards to quell the Hōjō of Odawara simply give the number of troops in each division within a purely military structure, making a total of 154,970 men. In addition 15 other daimyō mobilized 49,130 men, making a grand total of 204,100 men under Toyotomi Hideyoshi's command. A similar arrangement was to be found for the invasion of Korea, where the divisions were led by Hideyoshi's finest and most loyal generals who kept the Korean campaign going even when they knew it was hopeless. They finally perished on the field of Sekigahara, having stayed loyal to the memory of the great general and his young heir, and paid the price at the hands of the Tokugawa army.

## The Hōjō of Odawara

The best way of illustrating the interplay of family and vassal relationships over the years is by using two contrasting examples, of which the first is the Hōjō, amongst whom family relationships rather than vassalage were most highly valued and trusted. Hōjō Soun (1432–1519), the founder of his line, was fighting in 1467, while the fifth generation of the Hōjō daimyō capitulated to Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1590. The most noticeable development over this time was in the size of the kashindan that the Hōjō daimyō could lead into battle. In 1467 Ise Nagauji, later to be known as Hōjō Soun, had only six men under his command. By the time of the death of his great-great-grandson in 1590 that original war band had grown to tens of thousands, who defended the Hōjō kokka from within several formidable castles.

Hōjō Soun was born in 1432 and benefited from the marriage of his elder sister to Imagawa Yoshitada, an illustrious daimyō from Suruga province. This



happened while the Onin War was still raging, and gave Soun the opportunity to escape from the devastation of Kyōto in 1469 to serve his in-laws in Suruga. When Yoshitada was killed in battle in 1476 his son Ujichika's rightful inheritance was placed in great peril, so the 'seven samurai' of Soun and his six followers went to the assistance of Soun's nephew. Their military skills settled the matter, for which Soun received from the grateful heir the reward of a castle. Continued service brought further reward, and in 1495 Soun acquired for the Hojō the site that was to be the family's future capital: Odawara on Sagami Bay.

Hojō Soun died at the ripe old age of 87 and was succeeded by his son Hojō Ujitsuna (1487–1541), who protected his position in three ways. First, he ensured the continued loyalty of Soun's old retainers by honouring the memory of his father, a programme given concrete expression by the memorial temple of Soun-ji in Yumoto. Second, he developed a legal and administrative system for the domain that began to institutionalize the systems that under Soun had relied mainly on the daimyō's own personality. Third, he continued his father's programme of conquest, leading an army in 1524 against Edo castle, which lay in the centre of the important rice-growing area of the Kantō plain. Edo castle is now the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. The capture of Edo set in motion 17 years of war between the Hojō and the Uesugi for control of the Kantō, and the initiative continued to swing from one side to the other and back again. Soon the Hojō had rivals on their western flank as well, because when Imagawa Yoshimoto succeeded to the headship of the Imagawa in Suruga province he turned his back on the service once provided to his ancestors by Soun, and made an alliance with the Takeda against the Hojō.

Ujitsuna handed over the succession to the third generation in 1540. This was Hojō Ujiyasu (1515–70), who is generally regarded as the finest of the five Hojō daimyō. He was the contemporary of Uesugi Kenshin, Takeda Shingen and Imagawa Yoshimoto, all of whom kept the Hojō armies very busy during his long reign. In 1561 Uesugi Kenshin laid siege to Odawara castle, but he could make no impression on it after two months of fighting, and withdrew when the Takeda threatened his own territories. Two years later Hojō Ujiyasu and Takeda Shingen were to be found as allies besieging Uesugi's castle of Musashi-Matsuyama, just one example of the shifting pattern of alliances between the 'three kingdoms' during these turbulent times.

Hojō Ujiyasu died in 1570, and the fourth daimyō Hojō Ujimasa (1538–90) was to find himself as busy with diplomatic negotiations as his father had been with fighting. This was the decade that saw the notable victories of Oda Nobunaga. Secure behind the Hakone Mountains the Hojō stayed well out of Nobunaga's affairs, but when Hideyoshi took over Nobunaga's domains the balance of power in Japan changed rapidly. Once Shikoku and Kyūshū were added to Hideyoshi's territories the Hojō began to wonder if their mountain passes and strong castles would be likely to hold back Hideyoshi any better than stretches of sea. The answer came in 1590. Odawara castle fell, and with the exile of Hojō Ujinao (1562–91) five generations of the most consistently successful Sengoku daimyō came to a final and bloody end.

## **The Ukita of Okayama**

The Ukita family of Bizen province on the shore of the Inland Sea represent a different form of daimyō development. Their initial rise to power echoed that of Hojō Soun almost a century earlier, but their hegemony lasted only 23 years. In further contrast to the family links within the Hojō, the Ukita relied more upon vassals in a military chain of command.

The Sengoku Period began in Bizen province in 1483 when the Akamatsu family, who had been appointed as shugo by the Shogun, lost control of the province to the Urakami and Matsuda families. Years of strife followed, and in 1544 a vassal of the dominant Urakami called Ukita Naoie came of age and was



Hōjō Ujiyasu is regarded as the finest of the five Hōjō daimyō. He was the contemporary of Uesugi Kenshin, Takeda Shingen and Imagawa Yoshimoto, all of whom kept the Hōjō armies very busy during his long reign. This hanging scroll is in Odawara castle.



given a modest fief. In 1545 he was placed in charge of 30 ashigaru in the fort of Ootogo, which lay in a perilously exposed place. Naoie's military skills ensured that he did well in this command. He also helped the Urakami fight back against treacherous vassals and was rewarded generously until he rivalled his overlord in wealth. More significantly, he was to find that other vassals were more ready to follow him into battle than the daimyō Urakami Munekage. Marriage alliances also helped, and a crucial military agreement with the powerful Mōri family enabled Naoie to move against Munekage and take over his domain in 1577. In consolidating his gains Naoie took his cue from Oda Nobunaga, concentrating his power in the massive castle of Okayama, built on the fertile plain rather than in the small fortresses on mountain tops that had served those whom he had overthrown. Yet in spite of his strategic and economic vision Naoie was still a military man whose fortunes depended upon winning battles.

In 1578 his Mōri allies took on Oda Nobunaga at the battle of Kōzuki. Believing that the Mōri cause was hopeless Ukita Naoie claimed illness and



A samurai decapitates a rival with one blow of his sword in this detail from a painted screen depicting the battle of Nagakute. The cut has been delivered from the rear, slicing through the shaft of one of his three sashimono flags before entering the man's neck.



sent only a token force to aid the Mōri, thus hedging his bets. It was a diplomatic sleight of hand that worked, and when Ukita Naoie died in 1581 his domain was confirmed by Oda Nobunaga as the possession of Naoie's young heir Hideie. Ukita Hideie was adopted by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, whose rise to power greatly helped Hideie's fortunes. Theoretically, his lands were held at the pleasure of Hideyoshi, but in practical terms Hideie had complete authority over its military and civil affairs, and the size of the Ukita domain ranked him eighth among Hideyoshi's vassals. Having therefore avoided the fate of the Hojō, Hideie took a prominent role in the Korean campaign and by 1598 could list 1,480 retainers in his kashindan. Seven of these had holdings of 10,000 koku or more, the same as some daimyō. The structure is shown in the diagram on page 18. Only 11 unattached vassals had fiefs of 20 koku, presumably the minimum size necessary for a man to equip a mounted samurai. Together with their followers and non-samurai recruits they went towards making up an army that totalled 20,000 men. It was a kashindan that had more in common with the domains of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi than it did with the Hojō. Unlike their system of hereditary vassals and family members that had evolved over five generations, the Ukita vassal band, and hence its army, was a rapid creation put together in one generation of fighting under an inspiring and successful leader.

Whereas his father Naoie had fought to gain his domain, Ukita Hideie had simply inherited it, and the new balance of power under Hideyoshi meant that Hideie did not have to fight to retain his kokka. Instead Hideie's continued survival depended far more on his behaviour at court, where the ability to perform the tea ceremony could place a daimyō under as much stress as facing a cavalry charge. Because of this need to be seen in Kyōto much of Hideie's administrative work within Bizen was delegated to others, and success attended their fortunes until the death of Hideyoshi. Loyal to Hideyoshi's memory and faithful to his heir, Ukita Hideie took the field against Tokugawa Ieyasu at the battle of Sekigahara and paid the price. He died in exile in 1662 at an advanced age, having had much time to reminisce about his family's contribution to the world of samurai armies.

## Alliance by adoption and marriage

The strongest links within the Hojō family structure were those between the father and the eldest son, but not all families were so lucky. Takeda Katsuyori, heir to the great Shingen, showed himself to be an accomplished commander of mounted samurai at the battle of Mikataga Hara in 1572, but the senior Takeda retainers distrusted him in the position of daimyō, and their suspicions were justified when he led them to their deaths at Nagashino in 1575. Yet the extraordinarily strong and loyal filial bonds that held the Hojō together for five generations were by no means confined to the father/eldest son relationship. Younger Hojō brothers in each generation acted loyally and unselfishly, setting up powerful branches of the family that were never disrupted by unseemly thoughts of rebellion. For example, Hachigata castle in Musashi province, one of the Hojō's key fortresses in the Kantō, was commanded by Hojō Ujikuni (1541–97), the third son of Hojō Ujiyasu. For Hachigata to function efficiently Ujikuni

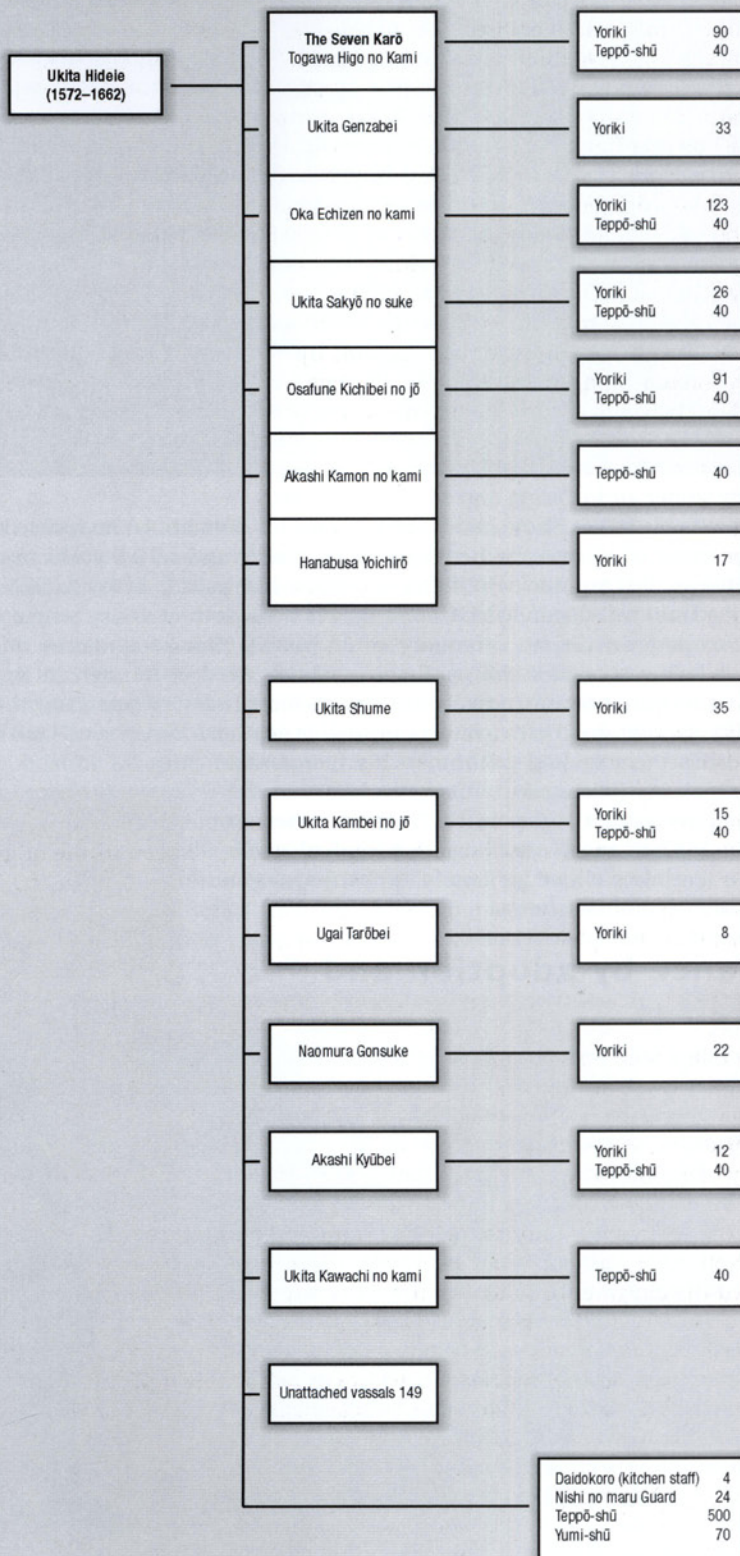
Satake Yoshinobu (1570–1633) fought the Hōjō at Odawara in 1590. After Sekigahara, where he quietly sat on the fence, he was transferred to Akita.





As one of Hideyoshi's most loyal generals Ukita Hideie commanded a large army, shown in part in this diagram for 1600 in terms of his retainers acting as generals with yoriki (mounted samurai) and foot soldiers (noted only as teppō-shū, firearms squads) under their command. There are also guards and administrative staff in his hatamoto.

### The kashindan of Ukita Hideie c. 1600



had to rule his domain almost as if it was an independent entity, because when a crisis loomed there would be no time for him to be taking his orders from Odawara. So Ujikuni surveyed the land, granted rewards, promulgated ordinances, taxed the farmers and mobilized troops exactly as his brother the daimyō did in Odawara. He did it faithfully and well for his entire life, turning back the forces of Takeda Shingen in 1569, and in 1590 holding off Maeda Toshiie and Uesugi Kagekatsu for a full month with only 3,000 men while Odawara was being besieged by Hideyoshi.

Hōjō Ujikuni also provides an example of how local alliances could be created or strengthened through the adoption of sons. He was himself adopted into the Fujita family, who had gone over to the Hōjō side when the Ogigayatsu Uesugi lost their final castle to the Hōjō. The relationship proved to be a great success, but this was not the case for Ujikuni's brother Ujihide, the seventh son of Hōjō Ujiyasu. Instead of being adopted into a family that had submitted to the Hōjō to ensure their continued support, Ujihide was adopted at the age of ten by Takeda Shingen as a way of forging a military alliance. This made Ujihide virtually a hostage, but when the alliance between the Takeda and the Hōjō ended Ujihide was not disposed of but was instead returned honourably to his natural family, who were then seeking an alliance with the Uesugi. So in 1569 Hōjō Ujihide became Uesugi Kagekatsu, the heir of the childless Uesugi Kenshin. It was Kenshin's wish that on his death his domains should be divided between Kagekatsu and his nephew Kagekatsu, but when Kenshin died in 1578 Kagekatsu dispossessed his cousin of his inheritance. Poor Kagekatsu finally committed suicide in 1579.

The Hōjō also brought adopted sons into their fold who behaved as loyally as the genetic brothers. Hōjō Tsunanari (1515–87) was the son of a retainer of the Imagawa and was adopted by Hōjō Ujitsuna. He was entrusted with Tamanawa castle and became the hero of the night battle of Kawagoe when he defended that fortress in 1545. His sons Ujishige and Ujikatsu also became loyal Hōjō men.

Similarly, Ukita Naoie was served well by seven karō, two of whom were his brothers. Three others – Togawa, Osafune and Oka – had been in the original command assigned to Naoie in 1545. Hanabusa had joined him in the late 1540s and Akashi in 1577. In a manner similar to the Hōjō, most of these had command of strategic castles within the domain, but the trust placed in them was not quite as complete as that shown by the Hōjō to their loyal followers, so there were frequent changes in castle commands to prevent the retainers from becoming too entrenched in their localities. In this we see another aspect of the military chain of command model that the Ukita domain had become.

Marriage was an equally common way of cementing alliances between families. Several complex marriage deals took place between the Takeda, Imagawa and Hōjō families over a period of three generations, so that Takeda Katsuyori ended up marrying the sister of the wife of the brother of the wife of his brother. Some of the women involved in such deals led wretched lives, being torn between loyalty to their husbands and burning desires for revenge. Oda Nobunaga was not above using his wife to destroy her own family. He married the daughter of Saitō Dōsan, whose territory he coveted, and told his wife, quite falsely, that he was plotting with her father's chief retainers to murder him. Having been placed in a nice dilemma of loyalty she eventually decided to pass on the information to Dōsan, who obligingly did away with several of his most loyal retainers and weakened the family irreparably.



# The creation of samurai armies

## From tax to troops

A strong heir who could lead the samurai armies to victory was essential, but that strength lay as much in resources as bravado. A wise ruler not only knew how to lead men into battle. He also knew who those men were, where he could find them and how much they would cost; and the latter element depended totally on the mundane subject of land taxation. In any province there would be found daimyō land, private land held by vassals, and also some patches of shrine and temple land connected to headquarters temples in Nara or Kyōto. There might also be some absentee landlords and separate landowning communities of merchants or artisans, all of whom became increasingly dependent upon the local daimyō as the years went by and the daimyō's power increased. Land was never held absolutely as though in a vacuum. There was always a superior authority that confirmed or granted rights. Theoretically, all the daimyō held their lands at the pleasure of the Shogun, although this had almost no practical application.

During the period covered by this book two successive systems for land taxation were put in place. The first, the kandaka system, allowed the registering of land in terms of the cash value of the goods and services that it afforded its holders. The valuation of land was expressed in multiples of kan (or kanmon), one kan being 1,000 mon (copper coins) – usually held together by a string that passed through the hole in the middle of each individual coin. Under the Hōjō, who were the most sophisticated operators of the kandaka system, the nengu (annual land rent) that was due was assessed at 500 mon for each tan; (9.92 ha or .245 acres) of paddy field, and 165 mon per tan for upland fields.

It is difficult to imagine the vast urban sprawl of metropolitan Tokyo as mile after mile of the most fertile land in Japan, but that is what the Hōjō's control of the Kantō gave them from the foothills of Mount Fuji to the mountains beyond Tokyo Bay. Rice was produced in wet paddy fields, barley in dry fields, while tea and cotton became more prevalent as the century progressed. Yet even though the Hōjō controlled the Kantō, they did not actually own all the



The first battle of Kizugawaguchi in 1576 was a naval victory won by the piratical Murakami navy who served the Mōri family against Oda Nobunaga.

land within it, nor was the daimyō land just for the family's own use. Its wealth was put towards public works such as castle repair, agricultural development and to provide a stipend for the samurai who garrisoned the castles and therefore had no time to farm, a point reflected in the fact that most daimyō land was clustered around the castles.

The rest of the Hōjō kokka was jealously guarded private land in the possession of Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines and a large number of small landholders, most of whom combined the professions of samurai and farmer. A wise daimyō would not steal such land. In fact a wise daimyō would not need to, because these landowners needed the protection that a powerful daimyō

The Hōjō retainers in 1559, showing the castles in which their companies were based.





A hanging scroll depicting Ikeda Tsuneoki, the loyal general of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was killed during the battle of Nagakute in 1584. Around his neck hangs a Buddhist monk's kesa. He holds a war fan and is seated on a camp stool in command of his troops.



could give them. They also welcomed the extra income they could receive as a reward for army service and appreciated being given increased responsibilities and honorific titles. An astute daimyō could therefore behave as if the private land was indeed his own, trusting that in Japan, as in Merrie England, everyone loved a lord.

From a technical point of view the big breakthrough in the Hōjō control of the private land within their kokka came in 1559. Over the preceding years the Hōjō had been perfecting a standardized index for surveying both private and daimyō land. They had of course levied taxes in the past, including special fiscal measures when the domain was under immediate military threat, but because the kandaka was standardized the daimyō finally had the means to assess first the amount of tax that any retainer could take from his own land, and second to convert that retainer's wealth into his military obligation to the Hōjō.

The domain was carefully and meticulously surveyed, and the results appeared in 1559 in the form of the *Odawara-shū shoryō yakuchō*, the 'Domesday Book' of the Hōjō kokka. About 500 retainers in 825 villages were listed, with their consequent military obligations stressed throughout by the use of the term *shū* (troop or company) to identify them, as shown in the map on page 21. Temple land, shrine land and craftsmen were placed in separate sections. The daimyō land was not listed, but the family knew what was theirs, and for the first time they also knew exactly what their domain was worth. The register did not mean that private land was abolished, but it was a momentous step towards the Hōjō taking control of the means of production of everything within their boundaries. Yet in spite of the legendary loyalty of Japanese retainers there were some instances of tax evasion. For example, in 1565 a temple in Izu province complained to the Hōjō that it had not received tax for three years from the farmers who cultivated its lands. The excuse they had been

given was that wild boars had eaten the crops. The daimyō suggested that the temple was lax in its administration and added wryly that the priests should eat the wild boar instead!

As the assessment of the land was expressed in cash terms it was first as hard cash that taxes were collected, until technical difficulties obliged the Hōjō to change the system. Being unable to mint sufficient coins within the domain, and being equally unable to control the entry of debased coinage into the domain, conversion standards were introduced to express the tax in terms of rice, lacquer or cotton. Payment could then be made in kind. This had other advantages because tax rice, for example, could be used directly to feed the Hōjō troops when they went to war.

Such an accurate knowledge of the wealth of lands required the appointment of administrators to oversee village affairs. Within the Hōjō domain the salaried officials they employed often wore another hat: that of the loyal samurai who would lead the villagers into battle, so we read of village headmen being granted tax exemptions if they became vassals of the Hōjō, and even being granted a stipend in return for military service. The advantage for the daimyō was that he acquired more names on his 'retained' list in the lower reaches of the samurai class in return for very little outlay. The village headmen benefited by enjoying the enhanced social status that valiant service could only further improve. Such enthusiasts would maintain lists of able-bodied men who would be willing to put down their tools, pick up a spear and follow their swaggering leader into battle.

Tax exemptions could also be granted for developing new land or reclaiming derelict fields, even though the latter may well have been made derelict by the Hōjō's own troops fighting over it. In 1580, for example, the daimyō ordered a local samurai in an area that had recently been a battlefield to ensure that his fields were restored completely and swiftly to productivity. The landowner was allowed to show consideration in the matter of tax collection to any peasants who had fled from the fighting, but that was the only concession he was allowed. Every square inch of valuable land had to be restored and cultivated anew. To have been caught up in a war was unfortunate, but it was a fact of life in Sengoku Japan.

The Hōjō family became particularly demanding during the reign of Ujijasu, who instituted a number of taxes on private landholdings that were paid directly to the daimyō, and his growing power and continued success in the name of the kokka enabled him to do so with impunity. One other development that greatly increased the hold that the Hōjō had over the lands in their domain and, crucially, the control they exercised over the men who owned it and farmed it, was by the gradual separation of the warrior from any particular locality. As the 1559 register illustrates very well by its classification of retainers by shū (troop), even though most Hōjō retainers still lived on the land, the particular area of land that sustained them was often to be found many miles away from where the man was stationed. The identification of a samurai with a locality – a hallmark of medieval society going back many generations – was becoming blurred. The total separation of the military and the agricultural function may have been many decades away, but its beginnings lay in the daimyō's need for control, and this the Hōjō realized very early on in their rise to power.

Later in the Sengoku Period, in a change associated largely with Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the kandaka system gave way to the kokudaka system, whereby the valuation of land depended on what the land could theoretically produce. This was expressed in koku, one koku being approximately 180 litres (4.9 bushels) of rice, an amount commonly regarded as what was needed to feed one man for one year. The difference between the two systems in terms of taxation was that under the kandaka system the tax was collected as cash. Under the kokudaka system it was collected in the form of rice, but the shift to kokudaka



was also a political move. Hideyoshi was not satisfied with receiving land-tax data from local landlords. Instead he instituted a nationwide land survey known as the Taikō kenchi. The results provided the basis for replacing a standard linked to the customary tax yield of land with a thorough knowledge of the estimated produce of the land owned for the whole of Japan.

## The composition of armies

In 1559 a Hōjō samurai holding land assessed as 100 kanmon was required to supply between ten and 12 men, the variation depending upon certain exemptions or reductions that could be granted because of other services rendered. The 1559 register does not tell us how many men the retainers listed there were required to mobilize, but as the total comes to 72,168.259 kanmon we may expect the Hōjō army in that year to have included 10,000 men from these retainers in addition to the daimyō lands. However, the existence of exemptions, for whatever reasons they may have been granted, complicates the picture when it comes to individual calculations. In the 1559 register a certain Matsuda Sama no suke was assessed at 1,277 kan 200 mon, but as part of this was exempt his military obligation was based on only 1,000 kanmon of 'taxable income', requiring him to supply 120 men.

### The military service of Okamoto Masahide in the Hōjō Horse Guards, 1571



As well as serving in a personal capacity Okamoto Masahide, one of the Hōjō daimyō's elite mounted bodyguard, was required to supply the troops shown here, a number based on the value of his income, realized through surveys of his land and its translation into cash terms, plus an extra stipend from the daimyō for being a member of the Horse Guards.



Until 1570 the Hojō military obligation was expressed simply as the total number of troops to be supplied. After that date developments in military technology required that the number of men in each category such as arquebusiers, spearmen, archers etc, should be specified. Thus Miyagi Shirōbei no jō from Musashi province, whose land was assessed at 284.84 kanmon, was required to supply seven mounted samurai (himself included) and 28 ashigaru, namely two arquebusiers, 17 spearmen, one archer and eight others. In a further example consistent with these figures Ikeda Sozaemon of Sagami province was required in 1581 to supply 27 men: himself, six mounted samurai and 20 ashigaru, specified as one arquebusier, 12 spearmen, one archer and six others. Certain retainers, notably the elite members of the Horse Guards, received extra income from the daimyō lands or from special taxes imposed across the domain that allowed them to stipend their own men.

Other daimyō had similar schemes in operation. Takeda Shingen's retainer Oi Samanojō was obliged in 1564 to supply four mounted samurai and 34 ashigaru from lands valued at 228 kanmon for assessment purposes. In Kaga province under the later kokudaka system, for each 10,000 koku a retainer was required to supply seven banners, 20 mounted samurai, 25 arquebusiers, 50 archers, 50 spearmen and an unspecified number of labourers. A 500 koku retainer had to supply one arquebusier and three spearmen. The Mōri required 50 spearmen, 50 arquebusiers and 25 archers from a 10,000 koku retainer. A 500 koku man supplied two spearmen, two arquebusiers and one archer.

By the time of the fall of Odawara to Hideyoshi in 1590 a wide spectrum of military service was developing within the doomed Hojō domain. At one end were the virtually professional soldiers who served in the Hojō Horse Guards. At the other end were the low-ranking samurai who continued to live in the villages and carried swords only on occasions, and it is interesting to note that after the fall of the Hojō in 1590 many of these men put their military pasts behind them and quietly returned to their villages to get on with the business of farming. In this they were following the policy of the man who had destroyed the Hojō line, because in 1588 Toyotomi Hideyoshi had enacted the first of two ordinances that were to have an enormous influence on the structure of samurai armies. This was the infamous 'Sword Hunt', by which all weapons were confiscated from the peasantry and placed in the hands of the daimyō and their increasingly professional armies. In 1588, of course, the Hojō had yet to be brought under control, but once this had been achieved Toyotomi Hideyoshi had no need for their part-time soldiers, so many Hojō men who had once combined the roles of samurai and farmer chose to become retainers of Tokugawa Ieyasu, to whom Hideyoshi gave the conquered Hojō provinces. The others chose to be farmers, yet 200 years later the descendants of former Hojō samurai who had returned to the land would boast that their ancestors had once served as samurai under the glorious five generations of the Hojō.

## The call to arms

In practical terms, for the vast majority of samurai and ashigaru who were not serving permanently in a castle garrison the transformation from numbers on a document to armed warriors began with the issuing of a call to arms. The best example is a famous document issued in about 1560 by Hojō Ujimasa. The urgency of the situation, and the need for every man Hojō Ujimasa can get his hands on, comes through very strongly in the admonition that 'not even a monkey-tamer' was exempt from the call-up.



Matsudaira Tadamasa (1597–1645) was a grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu and fought during the Summer Campaign of Osaka in 1615, where he took 57 heads. His trousers and long-sleeved jinbaori (surcoat) are ornamented with the Tokugawa mon. He carries a paper-tasselled war fan in his right hand.



The speed of response to such a document varied with the urgency of the situation. When it was necessary for the army to assemble, either for an actual campaign or for review and training purposes, those who would normally live out in the villages would be advised by a runner who would give as many days' notice of the muster as was practically possible. Over the next few days the man would assemble his armour and weapons and make whatever repairs were necessary to his equipment. He would have been told to listen for the sound of the horagai (conch shell trumpet), drum or bell that would indicate the hour to move off. Early one morning therefore, such a sound would ring out, and the recruits would meet each other on the road as they made their way to the agreed place of assembly. This might involve a two- or three-hour walk. Here they would be drilled and inspected by the samurai whose responsibility it was to supply these men for the war effort. Following the roll call, the samurai would lead the contingent in a march to the castle. Once the entire army was assembled a decision would be made about who and how many would stay behind to strengthen the garrison, then the Hojō army would set off to war.

Raising an army could proceed at an organized pace providing that the enemy were nowhere near. However, emergency situations, such as an invasion of one's province by an enemy, did not allow the leisurely assembly described above. In such a situation the farmers needed to become soldiers within hours rather than days, which implied considerable readiness and preparation on their part, and an efficient internal communications system to enable the call to arms to be transmitted rapidly. The most successful daimyō to tackle this problem was Takeda Shingen, who was engaged in almost constant conflict with Uesugi Kenshin and Hojō Ujijasu. Each was constantly invading the others' territories, so there was a constant need for quick notification of a raid, thus Takeda Shingen established a series of fire beacons throughout his territories.

Armies were therefore created and assembled, but did they always exist in reality in the same numbers as they existed on paper? The early Hojō records suggest that the supply of their comparatively small numbers of troops was usually realized in practice, but the later example of the Shimazu in the Korean campaign of 1592 indicates that this was not always the case. The number of men Shimazu Yoshihiro took to Korea is recorded in the main muster rolls as 10,000. The family records, however, state that the number to be supplied was



When first introduced to Japan the arquebus was regarded as a prestige weapon to be carried by samurai, but it was daimyō such as Oda Nobunaga who realized very soon that the most effective way for them to be used was by issuing them in large numbers to ashigaru (foot soldiers) and then delivering controlled volleys of bullets.



15,000. This was based on the kokudaka system and a ratio of two mounted samurai and 20 foot soldiers per 100 koku, but as the Shimazu were in straitened circumstances following their recent defeat they may simply have been unable to make up the full number. A look at the fine detail of the Shimazu army is even more revealing, because the family records show an army consisting of 600 samurai (of whom as many as possible were required to supply horses) and 3,600 ashigaru, the latter being divided into 1,500 arquebusiers, 1,500 archers, 300 spearmen (of which 200 are specified as nagaeyari, bearers of the long spears akin to European pikes) and 300 flag bearers. Even on the basis of the 10,000 Yoshihiro is believed to have actually supplied, these numbers account for only 36 per cent of the force, so who were the others?

The answer is that the remaining 64 per cent were labourers, boatmen and porters. It is a statistic that illustrates the important change that had taken place since Hideyoshi's Separation Edict of 1591. No longer could a peasant emulate Hideyoshi by enlisting as a footsoldier and rising to be a general. A farmer who was forced to do his duty in Korea would not carry out that function with a sword or gun in his hand, but with a crippling heavy pack on his back. To the leader of a modern army such as Hideyoshi such a restriction on military manpower was a matter of no concern. He had troops in easy sufficiency, and because of the increased sophistication associated with modern weaponry, an untrained and undrilled peasant handed an arquebus or a long shafted spear would be a liability rather than an asset.

Labourers had of course always been needed, and their inclusion as a separate category within a samurai army in 1592 is illustrated by Goto Sumiharu, who held the fief of Fukue on the Goto archipelago. He had an assessed income of 140,000 koku, which would require him to supply 840 men for the Korean campaign. Family records, summarized in Table 1, show that he actually led only 700, of whom the majority were not fighting men but labourers and boatmen.

**Table 1: Goto Sumiharu's force in the invasion of Korea, 1592**

| Staff officers | Mounted samurai | Foot samurai | Attendants | Ashigaru | Labourers | Boatmen |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| 11             | 11              | 40           | 38         | 120      | 280       | 200     |

**Notes**

*The actual fighting troops supplied by Goto Sumiharu to Hideyoshi's invasion force are outnumbered by 'back-up' personnel such as labourers and boatmen. His administrative staff included priests, doctors and secretaries, together with five elite bugyō (military administrators) for the army – flags, supplies, bows and spears – plus tsukai (couriers) and metsuke (inspectors).*

Recruitment into a samurai army never involved women, but there were many occasions when women had to provide the necessary back-up for their menfolk. Hojo Ujikuni's orders of 1587 for the maintenance of the walls of Hachigata castle required his followers to make repairs after typhoon damage in preference to mending their own homes, and that if they were away on campaign the work had to be done by their wives and maidservants. In wartime the desperate situation of the siege of an isolated castle could mean that everyone was needed for its defence: men, women and even children. Women cast bullets, treated the wounded and prepared enemy heads for the head-viewing ceremony, but greater sacrifices could sometimes be required. In 1536 the castle of Sakasai was attacked on behalf of the Hojo family by Daidoji Suruga no kami. The head of the family, Sakasai Muneshige, was killed in the fighting, so his wife decided to follow her husband in death. She therefore took the bronze signalling bell from the castle and slipped it over her shoulders. She then jumped into the castle's moat, and the weight of the bell held her under the water until she drowned.



# Command and control



The presence of kinju (personal retainers) along with individual mounted samurai who are otherwise retainers to their daimyō is illustrated in the front ranks of the Matsuura army. The footsoldier squads, each under the control of an individual kogashira, come under the overall command of the mounted samurai.

As noted above, the daimyō's vassal structures as they existed on paper varied considerably, but there was even greater variation when the kashindan was transformed into a fighting army, because different retainers supplied not only different numbers but different types of troops, and it was up to the daimyō to deploy the resulting throng in an effective way. To enter the field with no organization beyond what existed within the individual contingents supplied by the retainers, which, as we have seen, could consist of a dozen or so soldiers armed with a variety of weapons, would not have been an efficient way of continuing. We therefore find that most of the troops supplied, particularly the lower ranks, were taken from their immediate leaders and organized into specialized squads under other commanders. These were the Japanese equivalent of the infantry and cavalry 'of the line', as distinct from the hatamoto, the daimyō's own 'household brigade'.

A typical command structure is illustrated in the diagram on page 24. At its apex is the daimyō himself in his military role as the sōtaishō (commander-in-chief). His hatamoto are directly accountable to him, while command of the 'troops of the line' is delegated through the subordinate generals who may be named samurai-taishō or ashigaru-taishō according to their particular command. Evidence that the ashigaru-taishō were as highly regarded as commanders of purely samurai units is provided by the inclusion of ashigaru-taishō within the elite of the Takeda family who were known as the '24 Generals'. Saigusa Moritomo, who was killed at the battle of Nagashino in 1575, was an ashigaru-taishō, as was Hara Toratane who, it was said, could make ten ashigaru fight like 100 samurai.

The taishō's troops fought in units usually called kumi (-gumi when used as a suffix). Most samurai were assigned to groups varying in size from ten to 100 men. Subunits of these divisions, such as vanguard, main body, wings and rear guard, fell under the command of officers called either kumigashira or monogashira. Even mounted samurai (expressed as a number of ki, the counting suffix for horsemen) served in organized units known as kiba musha-gumi (mounted samurai divisions), although their numbers would be complicated because they would be accompanied by their own kinju. These men were not assigned to other units but stayed to support their personal leaders. They appear

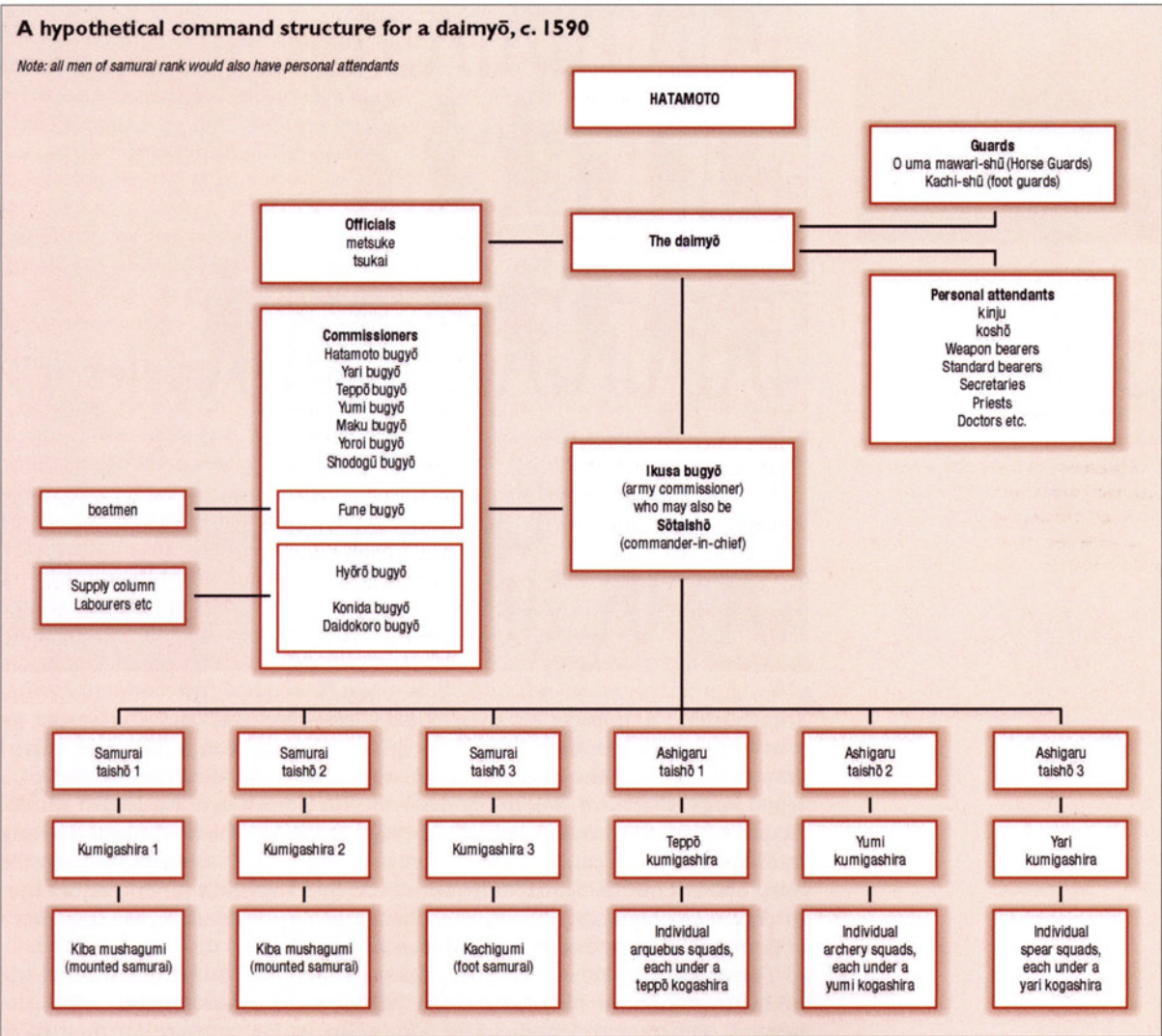


The entrance to the closely guarded maku of Tokugawa Ieyasu at the battle of Sekigahara. The curtains bear the Tokugawa mon (family crest).



on painted screens as little clusters of loyal troops around their masters, and would have been provided by the retainer himself as part of his obligation to the daimyō. A samurai of even the most modest means would have had one armed servant as his spear carrier.

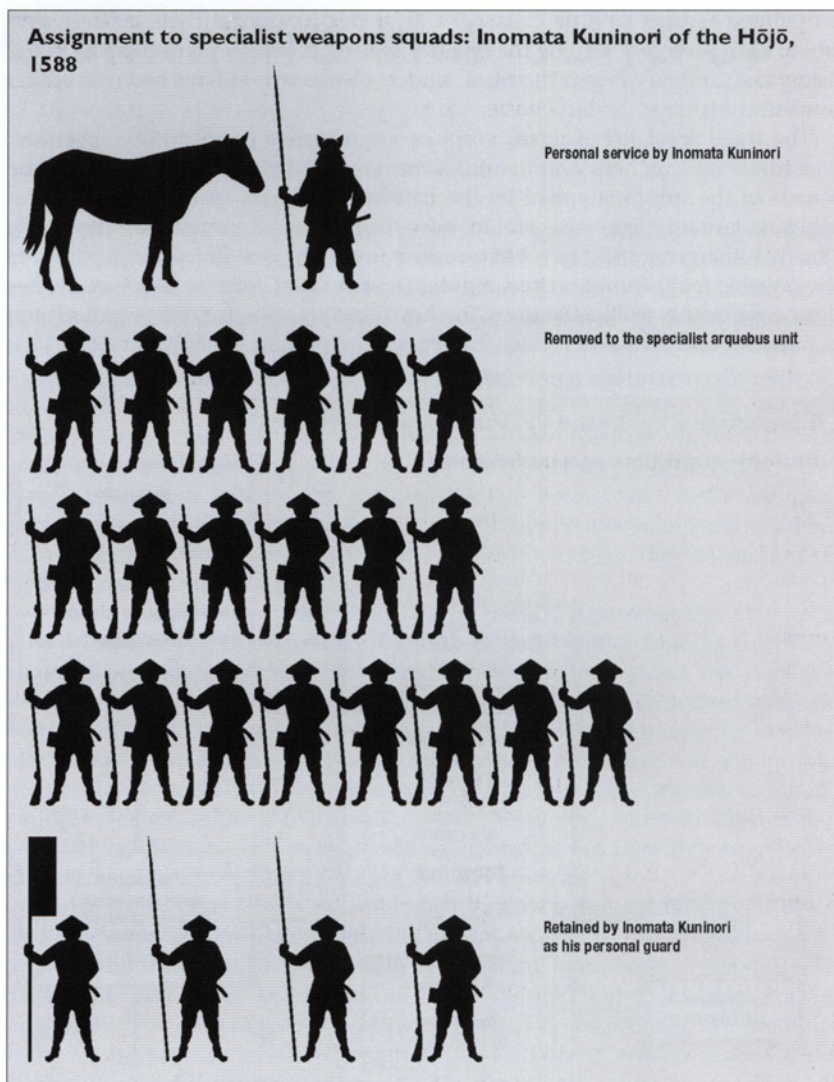
The three specialist ashigaru corps of arquebusiers (teppōgumi), spearmen (yarigumi) and archers (yumigumi) were created by the assignment to the squads of the troops supplied by the daimyō's retainers and placed under an ashigaru kumigashira, who would have command of companies that were usually homogeneous in terms of weapons used. The one exception to this was the possible inclusion of archers among the arquebus corps to keep up the fire during reloading, as illustrated by the *Kōyō Gunkan*, which notes a unit of 'ten arquebuses and five bows'. This became less common as drill developed for



This complex diagram begins with the daimyō's 'household division' called the hatamoto, literally those who stand 'under the flag'. The various bugyō (military administrators) act as the general staff under the overall direction of the ikusa bugyō, who may take the daimyō's place on the field of battle. The tsukai (couriers) and metsuke (inspectors) have closely defined functions. The 'guards division', mounted and on foot, have responsibility for the safety of the daimyō and any members of his family present. His personal attendants provide services ranging from weapon carrying to entertainment. The taishō (generals) command the fighting divisions 'of the line' in the form of samurai (mounted and on foot) and the three specialized ashigaru divisions of bow, spear and arquebus. Every samurai would also be accompanied by a number of personal followers, ranging from a sizeable 'platoon' down to a single spear bearer.



This diagram shows how the Hōjō were moving towards the use of specialist weapons squads towards the end of their hegemony. Of the 21 arquebusiers Kuninori is required to supply only one is retained by him. The others are drafted into the specialist arquebus squads.



arquebusiers. A number of these groups (between one and six) would be answerable to an individual kogashira, but the exact number varied enormously. Thus the arquebus men were under the direct command of a teppō kogashira, who was recognizable by his possession of a length of red-lacquered bamboo reminiscent of a swagger stick, in which was kept a strong ramrod in case any gunner's ramrod broke during action. As an example, in the *Kōyō Gunkan* one ashigaru kumigashira has five kogashira serving under him to command his company of 75 archers and 75 arquebusiers, so that every kogashira had responsibility for 30 men.

The archers provided the other means of firepower. Some members of the ashigaru yumigumi may have been highly trained sharpshooters like the samurai archers and were used as skirmishers or for sniping, but their most important role was to loose mass volleys of arrows, supported by carriers who were at hand with large quiver boxes containing 100 arrows. The bows used by the ashigaru archers were the same as those carried by samurai, being longbows of bamboo and rattan loosed from one-third of the way up the shaft.

The other specialized ashigaru units were the yarigumi (spearman companies), who almost always outnumbered missile troops within an army. A yarigumi kogashira would probably have 30 men under his command. Oda



Nobunaga, who was probably the first to introduce disciplined ashigaru spear units, possessed a yarigumi that made up 27 per cent of his fighting force, compared to 13.5 per cent for the arquebusiers. In 1575 the Uesugi had ten spearmen for every arquebusier, and by about 1570 the breakdown of weaponry within the Hōjō armies included between 33 per cent and 50 per cent of all men (samurai and ashigaru) armed with spears. Within the Takeda clan, the proportion was between 50 per cent and 66 per cent.

Large numbers of ashigaru in an army carried flags. The vast majority would carry the long vertical nobori banners which were used to identify the locations of various units. Painted screens indicate that long rows of identical nobori would be found with each unit, so they clearly acted as markers or rallying points for unit identification.

The creation of specialist ashigaru weapon squads was a trend that grew in importance over the years, and the Hōjō records provide some interesting data on this point. The example of Miyagi Shirōbei no jō includes two arquebuses within his contribution. The information we have on Miyagi does not tell us what he was expected to do with his pair of arquebusiers, but by 1588 we read that Inomata Kuninori, another important Hōjō retainer shown in the diagram on page 30 had control of 150 kanmon and had to spend 100 kan of his allotted obligation in stipending 20 men of a specialist arquebus squad. His remaining assessment of 50 kan, which came from taxation of his own lands, was for the supply of one flag bearer, two spearmen and one other arquebusier, all of whom would have fought beside him in battle. This shows that the Hōjō used weapon specialization towards the end of their reign, but it was by no means on the scale of Oda Nobunaga or Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

## The role of the bugyō

The other type of role that could be assigned to a senior vassal or family member was that of a bugyō, a word usually translated as commissioner or military administrator, who carried out various service functions rather than leading the fighting units. Some of them had command of others in specialist units. Titles and ranks varied somewhat, but the following names appear frequently in the records.

First was the very important ikusa bugyō (Army Commissioner) otherwise known as the sobugyō, the 'field marshal' to whom a daimyō might delegate strategic and tactical decision making. He would also take charge of military operations in the absence of the daimyō. The hatamoto ikusa bugyō (Hatamoto Army Commissioner) had overall responsibility for the hatamoto. He might also be referred to as the hatamoto musha bugyō.

The yari bugyō (Spear Commissioner) oversaw the administrative arrangements for all matters within the army relating to spears. This included the specialist spear squads but also took in the use of spears by the samurai, just as the yumi bugyō (Archer Commissioner) and teppō bugyō (Arquebus Commissioner) did for the bow and firearms squads.

The maku bugyō, perhaps best translated as Field Headquarters Commissioner, had responsibility for the transport, siting and erection of the maku, the large cloth curtains bearing the daimyō's mon (badge) that provided the traditional field headquarters post for a general on the battlefield. The maku was such a feature of samurai life that the Shogunate was known as the bakufu, the 'government from within the maku'. Some versions had awnings to protect the headquarters area from sun and rain. The curtains themselves, and the makugushi (literally the 'maku skewers') the heavy spiked iron poles from which they were suspended, were carried on the backs of pack horses.

The hata bugyō (Flag Commissioner) controlled the often bewildering system of flags used by a samurai army from the heraldry displayed and the division of units by background colour of the flags to their use for signalling. The yoroi bugyō (Armour Commissioner) saw to the supply and distribution of



Maeda Toshiie was an important member of Oda Nobunaga's red horo unit, one of the two units that made up his elite Horse Guards. This statue of him wearing the horo is in the city of Kanazawa, which was Toshiie's headquarters when he became a daimyō in his own right.



armour for the entire army. The shodōgu bugyō (Equipment Commissioner) played a similar role with regard to all other items of an army's equipment.

The hyōrō bugyō (Provisions Commissioner) had overall responsibility for ensuring that the army was fed, a process that included purchasing food, foraging, storage and transport. This role included the provision of fodder for the horses. Serving under him would be the konida bugyō (Packhorse Commissioner) who supervised the transport on horseback or carts of army food supplies. To be placed in command of the baggage train was probably the least attractive position for a samurai, but in 1559 Tokugawa Ieyasu earned great renown when he guided a supply column into Odaka castle. In camp the food thus collected would be handed over to the gozen bugyō, otherwise known as the daidokoro bugyō (Kitchen Commissioner) who had responsibility for supplying meals from field kitchens. Finally the fune bugyō (Boat Commissioner) took charge of everything relating to transport on water.

Holding a position equivalent in prestige to the bugyō were the ikusa metsuke (army superintendents) otherwise known as the yokome (inspectors). In peacetime they had a disciplinary function that was transformed on the battlefield into that of overseeing the exploits of the individual samurai. As well as identifying instances of bravery and cowardice, they would investigate and assess as true or false any ambiguous claims of glorious achievement, so the peculiar samurai obsession with individual prowess kept them very busy. If necessary they would preside over inquiries – virtually military courts – when exploits were discussed and differences settled. Other tasks included the counting of heads and the identification both of the victim and the victor. During the savage Korean campaign this was replaced by the counting of noses and their dispatch, pickled in salt, back to Hideyoshi.

## The hatamoto

The taishō, bugyō and metsuke came under the direct command of the daimyō himself as members of his hatamoto ('those who stand beneath the flag'), an expression intended to show the close relationship between the 'household division' and their overall leader. In addition to these senior administrative and command ranks, hundreds more samurai and ashigaru stood 'under the flag' to protect the person of the daimyō. The units in which they served were usually called ban (guards) rather than merely kumi or shū, and their ranks included the elite Horse Guards whose role was not merely that of protecting the daimyō because Horse Guards led attacks, as they did on Mitsukuriyama castle in 1568. The hatamoto also included kachi (Foot Guards) and the koshō whose title I translated earlier as 'squires' or 'pages'. They were often the sons of retainers, but the duties assigned to these young men were far from ceremonial. When Nobunaga destroyed the Ikko-ikki communities of Echizen province in 1575 his koshō were given the grisly task of executing thousands of prisoners. The ranks of the hatamoto were completed by numerous specially selected ashigaru spearmen, archers, gunners, bearers and attendants, all of whom were willing to 'take the bullet'.

A vital liaison role, particularly during a battle, was played by the tsukai-ban (Courier Guards), who acted as messengers and *aides de camp* on a battlefield. As elite members of the hatamoto they led highly mobile lives and therefore had to be very easily recognized, so they often wore a brightly coloured horo or an extra-large sashimono (back flag), or even both together. Instead of a horo Takeda Shingen's tsukai wore a sashimono on which was the appropriate device of a busy centipede. The members of Tokugawa Ieyasu's tsukai-ban wore a sashimono with the character 'go' (the figure '5') on it, a mystical number associated with the god Fudō.

An exclusive body of samurai and ashigaru attended the daimyō himself to provide personal services on a larger scale to the usual arrangement for any samurai. For example, the zori tori (sandal bearer) carried footwear, among other





Important details concerning the personal attendants to a daimyō are to be found in this detail from a painted screen depicting the battle of Nagashino. Here is Oda Nobunaga, accompanied by his helmet bearer and his bow bearer, together with other ashigaru carrying spears and his arquebus in a lacquered case. The men with white jinbaori bearing a star motif are probably Nobunaga's koshō (squires or pages).



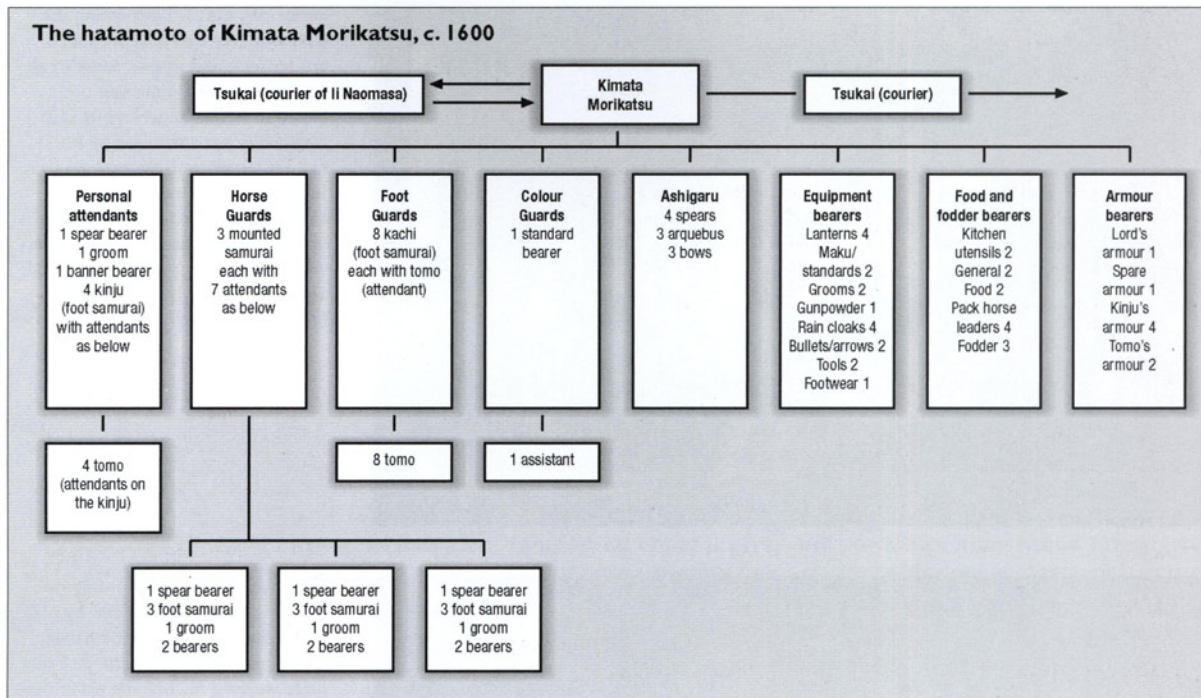
Here we see a daimyō sitting on his camp stool surrounded by his hatamoto. He is ready for battle, as may be noted from the fact that he is wearing his helmet while the helmet bearer sits to his left holding an empty helmet stand.



Although this picture refers to the peaceful Edo Period, hence the Sanada daimyō dressed in civilian clothes, we may note important features of his hatamoto, in particular the three signalling devices of conch shell, drum and gong, the greater and lesser standards and the weapons bearers.



## The hatamoto of Kimata Morikatsu, c. 1600



Even though he is only the commander of Ii Naomasa's vanguard Kimata Morikatsu is served by about 90 hatamoto, including three Horse Guards, each of whom is an important samurai in his own right. Liaison with the rest of the Ii army is provided by two tsukai, one of whom is accountable to Ii Naomasa.

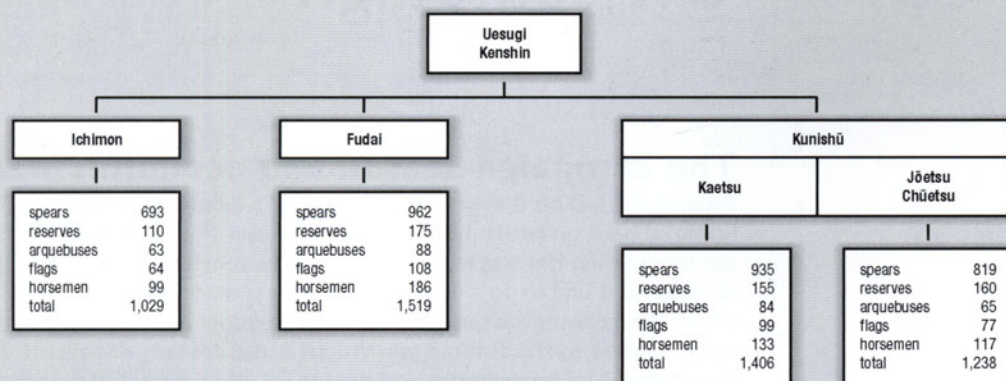
duties equivalent to an officer's batman. Grooms led his horse, while other ashigaru carried the daimyō's helmet, his spear, his bow, his arquebus or his naginata. The spear carrier was regarded as a very honourable role, as was that of helmet bearer, because a daimyō would only place his helmet on his head immediately before the start of a battle. Up to that point it would have been carried on a modified spear shaft by a helmet bearer. The distinctive helmet, often ornamented with horns, feathers and carved wooden or papier-mâché decorations, was therefore the identifying device closest to the daimyō's person. Many illustrations show ashigaru in the hatamoto carrying flags, armour boxes, quivers or an assortment of spears with very elaborate ornamental scabbards. Nor, of course, could a daimyō be expected to carry his own provisions. One ashigaru would be given this task, and would carry his lord's rice in a bag tied at his waist.

Highly visible within the hatamoto were the 'Colour Guard', the carriers of the o uma-jirushi (literally 'great horse insignia'), whose activities fell under the jurisdiction of the hata bugyō. The o uma jirushi was a device equivalent to the 'regimental colours'. It was sometimes a flag, but more frequently consisted of a striking three-dimensional object. They were usually very large and were strapped securely into a carrying frame worn on the standard bearer's back. Ropes were provided for the carrier to steady his flag in a wind or on the run, and in the case of the largest examples two comrades would hold two separate ropes to keep it steady. Smaller devices (including the ko uma jirushi or 'lesser standard') were carried in a leather bucket fastened to the ashigaru's belt.

Many daimyō took along Buddhist priests as army chaplains. They would perform religious services and could also be counted on to perform funerary nembutsu, the ritual of calling on the name of Amida Buddha. They might even advance at great risk to their own lives during the midst of battle to offer nembutsu to the spirits of those who had just died. They also provided memorial services, and would perform the useful act of visiting relatives of the slain and reporting deeds back to the home temple.

Other inclusions within the ranks of the hatamoto depended upon the daimyō's personal preferences. Doctors, priests, entertainers, huntsmen, ninja and secretaries might all serve 'under the standard' as part of his field

## The army of Uesugi Kenshin, 1559



headquarters' staff. The secretaries (yūhitsu) would keep a written log of heads collected and also compile accounts of the operation, sending written dispatches back and handling all the records required by the daimyō. Ukita Naoie had men in his hatamoto who had charge of his falcons and hunting dogs, while Takeda Shingen employed sarugaku (dance drama) performers along with 884 ashigaru, plus servants and Horse Guards within a very large army as follows:

This diagram of the army of Hōjō Ujijasu's contemporary Uesugi Kenshin is interesting in that it lists the different types of troops and their weaponry as supplied by the Uesugi retainers from the family, the hereditary 'inner lords' and the other retainers from the three parts of the Uesugi domain.

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Mounted samurai          | 9,121  |
| Two followers each       | 18,242 |
| Ashigaru in the hatamoto | 884    |
| Other ashigaru           | 5,489  |
| Total                    | 33,736 |

The diagram on page 34 shows an excellent detailed example of a senior taishō's own hatamoto. Kimata Morikatsu was one of the leading samurai in the Ii clan in 1600. He commanded the Ii vanguard which consisted of 800 men, of whom 90 made up Kimata's own hatamoto, a number that would have done justice to any daimyō. The mounted samurai were important men in their own right. They had their own personal attendants and would have had their names emblazoned on their sashimono. As a further example we may note in the diagram on page 35 the army of Uesugi Kenshin, which is broken down by the types of weapon carried, according to information in the 1559 Uesugi Register. The total army, from 39 names of retainers simply classified as ichimon (family), fudai (vassals), and kuni-shū, (country units), may be summarized as follows:

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Mounted samurai | 600   |
| Footsoldiers:   |       |
| Spearmen        | 4,899 |
| Flag bearers    | 402   |
| Arquebuses      | 360   |
| Reserves        | 610   |
| Grand total     | 6,871 |



# On campaign

## The campaign season and economic warfare

Because the wealth drawn from the yield of a daimyō's rice fields provided the financial basis on which he could go to war, it is not surprising to discover that the times when war was waged had almost as much to do with the agricultural calendar as it had to do with purely military considerations. In northern Japan, where the growing season was too short to allow double-cropping, the year's single harvest in the autumn was crucial if the domain was ever to feed itself. Uesugi Kenshin, for example, preferred to set off on long distant campaigns late in the autumn after the harvest had been gathered. Supplies would then be plentiful and men would be found in similar abundance to fill the ranks of his army. Shorter-range campaigns could be contemplated in the spring, so strategic decisions might therefore be made purely on the basis of how good the harvest had been. If the harvest's yield was high Kenshin could march as far as the Kantō; if it was low then a raid into Shinano might have to suffice.

Considerations about food supplies could also affect strategic decision making in another way, because campaigns could be organized simply to steal food. If famine loomed a military campaign outside the province reduced the burden on the local food supply and gave the opportunity to augment it by raiding. There were severe food shortages in Takeda Shingen's province within nine of the years between 1541 and 1569. In six of these famine years Shingen mounted campaigns after it was found that his own crops had failed.

During times of self-sufficiency campaigns of destruction could also be waged against a neighbour to damage his economic basis and therefore his ability to fight. Thus we read of armies cutting down growing crops and burning storehouses. A springtime raid would see the destruction of seedling beds or attacks on the peasants who were transplanting the young shoots. In the autumn the ripe grain would be cut and looted or tax payments loaded on pack trains were ambushed. Rice storehouses and their contents could be plundered, burned or destroyed at any time.

## The army on the march

Depending on the size of a daimyō's army it would normally be further subdivided into at least three divisions of vanguard, main body and rear guard. Flank divisions might also exist. We may therefore envisage a typical army on the march to present the following appearance. Preceding it would be the monomi (scouts), and then the zenku (vanguard leader or forerunner) would come into view leading the zengun no hata, the identifying flags of the vanguard. We would expect to see mounted samurai and the three ashigaru weapons specialties represented within the vanguard, all under the overall command of the zengun taishō (vanguard general) accompanied by his own followers. The main body would present a similar appearance except for the presence of the overall commander who was probably the daimyō himself. His hatamoto would be led by the conch shell trumpet, the war drum and the standards. Nearby would be his bunshō (subordinate generals) and the elite samurai of the hatamoto, accompanied by their own followers. The rear guard which followed would again be led by its own zenku and have its own flags, but had in addition to samurai and ashigaru weapons groups the pack train which consisted of pack horses, bullock carts and hand-pulled carts with their own guards.

As an example, the *Taikōki* describes the army of Toyotomi Hideyoshi as it left Kyoto in 1578. So many of the populace wished to see the spectacle that

This bas-relief on the plinth of the statue of Date Masamune in Sendai shows the great daimyō of northern Japan riding off to war at the head of his army.



stands were erected along the streets. The order of march of the army, which was about 12,500 men strong, was as follows:

1. Flag bearers
2. Arquebuses
3. Bows
4. Long spears
5. Samurai on foot, armoured and with swords, in a double file
6. Mounted samurai
7. The war drum
8. The horagai
9. The gong
10. The musha bugyō
11. The tsukai
12. Hideyoshi's spare horse
13. Hideyoshi's armour
14. Reserve ashigaru
15. The o uma jirushi (a multicoloured fukinuki – large streamer on a circular frame)
16. Foot guards in a double file
17. Toyotomi Hideyoshi
18. Hideyoshi's helmet bearer
19. Hideyoshi's Horse Guards
20. 100 samurai, variously armed
21. Small flags
22. Senior retainers
23. Tsukai-ban
24. Mounted samurai
25. Samurai on foot

Japanese armies sometimes marched to the beat of a drum, and the taiko yaku (drummer) would set the pace. Six paces were taken in between each drum beat.

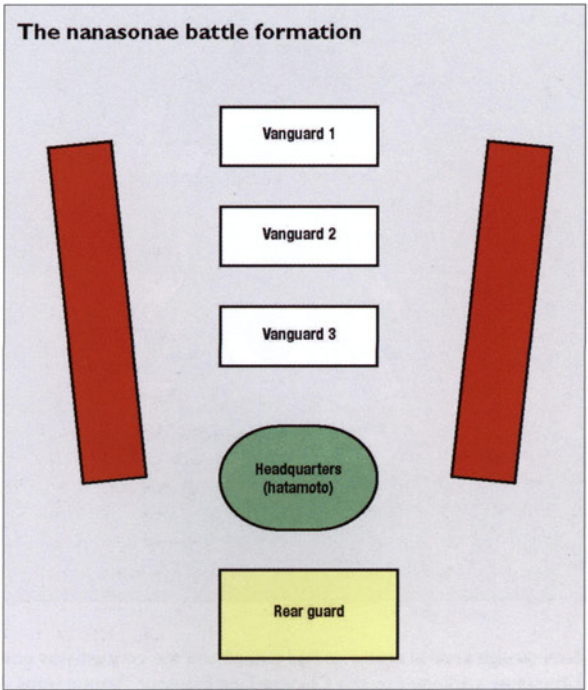
In practical terms this probably meant a rhythm of 'beat, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; beat, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6' so that the beat was always struck on the same foot. Strict discipline was essential on a march through enemy territory. When Tokugawa Ieyasu took part in the siege of Odawara in 1590 he issued strict regulations about keeping order. One haughty samurai would not keep to his place in spite of repeated warnings, so his company commander decapitated him on the spot and gave the culprit's splendid helmet to another man.

### Battlefield formations

Once the samurai army drew near to the enemy the officers would begin the transformation of the army on the march into its battle order. Traditionally, the commander-in-chief would sit in some state upon a folding camp stool within the semi-enclosed space provided by the maku, and would give orders to his subordinate generals, who would then transmit them rapidly down through the chain of command by signalling and messengers.

On the battlefield the grand divisions of vanguard, main body and rear guard that had sufficed on the

The 'seven regiments' formation was one of the simplest an army could adopt on the battlefield. Three vanguard units led the attack, supported by two flank units and a rearguard. The daimyō with his hatamoto formed the main body deep inside the formation.



(continues on page 40)



## The hachijin – eight battle formations of the Tang Emperor Taizong

● Arquebusiers  
 ▶ Bows  
 ▲ Spears  
 ✠ Sotaisho

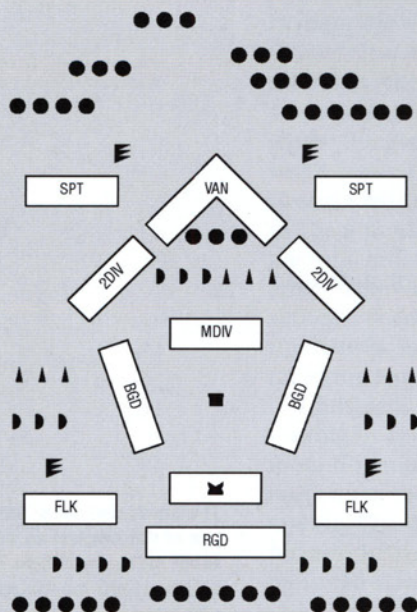
□ Samurai/ashigaru  
 E Flags/banners  
 ■ War drum, conch, gong

VAN Vanguard  
 1-5DIV 1st-5th divisions  
 MDIV Middle division  
 RTA Right army

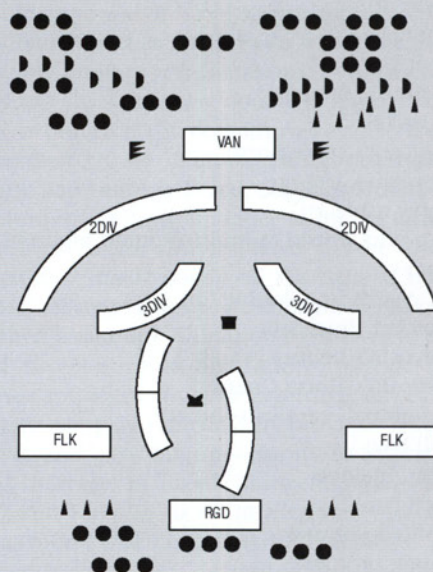
LTA Left army  
 SPT Support  
 FLK Flanker  
 BGD Bodyguard

RGD Rearguard  
 AMB Ambushers

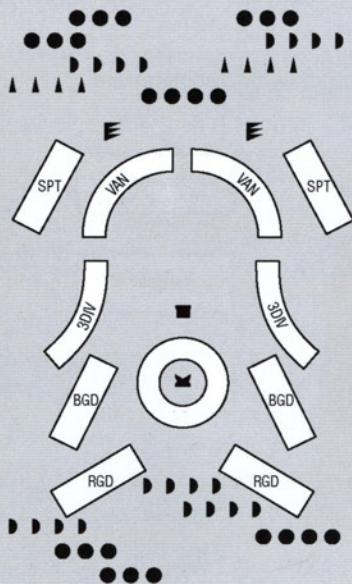
hōshi



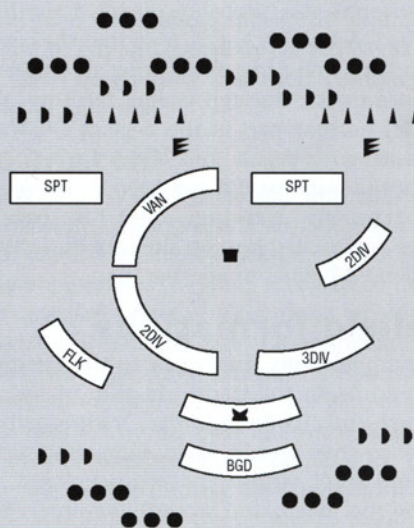
kakuyoku



gyorin

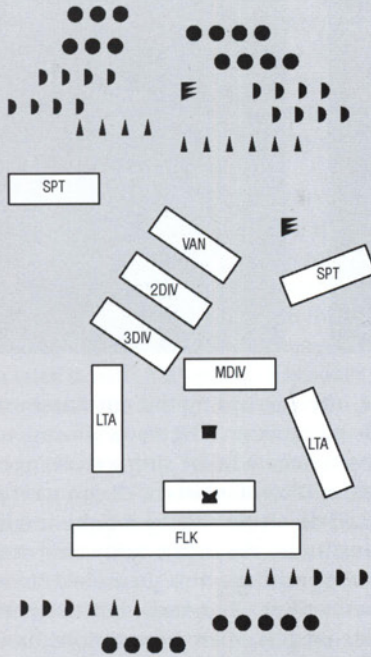


engetsu

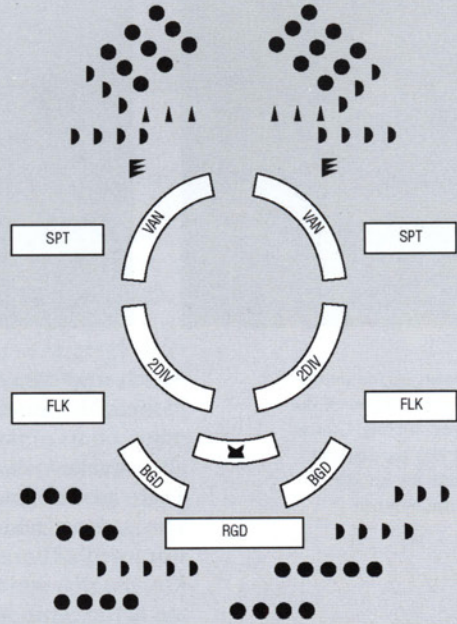




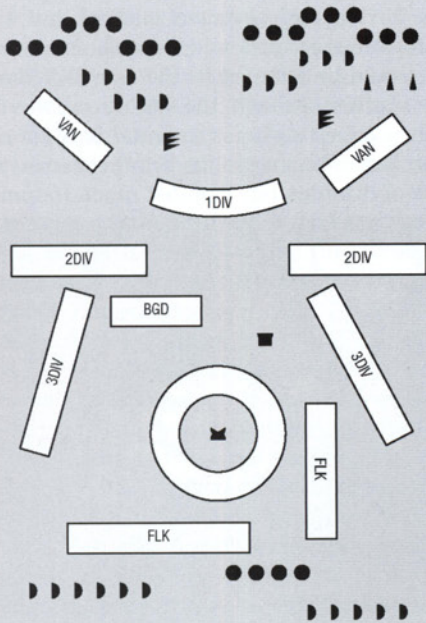
chōda



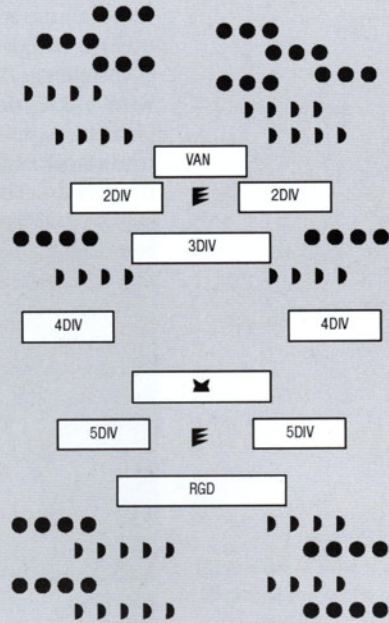
hōen



kōyaku



gankō



the Sengoku Period. They are described in detail in the text.





An army drawn up for battle in the gyorin formation of the Tang Emperor Taizong. Gyorin (fish scales) was particularly recommended for an army that was outnumbered.

march would be carefully rearranged, often according to a tried and trusted set battlefield formation that facilitated the process. This was a process to which many hours of training would have been devoted. The simplest arrangement of all was called nanasonae (seven units), as illustrated in the diagram on page 37. There are three vanguard units, flanked on either side by a right and left unit. The general with his hatamoto constitutes the main body and there is a rearguard. The use of the nanasonae formation is described in *Zokusen Kiyomasa-ki*, which deals with the wars of Katō Kiyomasa, but elsewhere there are many more references to elaborate set-piece battle formations based upon ancient Chinese models. All had some features in common, such as the general positioned to the rear centre surrounded by his hatamoto; the mounted samurai units ready to charge; a vanguard of brave samurai and ashigaru missile troops protected by ashigaru spearmen and sizeable flank and rear contingents. The baggage train would be guarded to the rear. Different units would communicate with one another through the highly mobile Courier Guards. Armies could regroup by converting one particular battle formation into another depending upon an enemy's movements or other factors such as the terrain. This reduced the risk of disorder, but required much training.

The hachijin, the eight most important traditional Chinese battlefield formations, are associated with the second Tang Emperor Taizong, who reigned from AD 626 to 649, and were probably derived originally from the strategic writings of the Chinese strategist Wu Zi, who was born around 400 BC. It is therefore somewhat extraordinary to find them being used many centuries later in a different country where crossbows and chariots have been replaced by arquebuses and horses. Yet so frequent are the references to named battle formations in the Sengoku Period that one must conclude that the respect accorded to the ancient Chinese art of warfare remained undiminished. In fact the study of the writings of ancient Chinese strategists is noted throughout samurai history. In 1087 Minamoto Yoshiie realized that an ambush had been set for him when he observed birds rising in confusion from a wood, a tip he had picked up from the classic *Art of War* by Sun Zi (Sun Tzu, or Sonshi in Japanese). Takeda Shingen so valued Sun Zi's teachings that he had a quotation from the *Art of War* emblazoned on his battle flag.

There is no mention of set-piece battle formations in the *Art of War*, and a reference in the *Zoku Nihongi* (the continuation of the Chronicle of Japan) for 761 is the earliest written reference to the concept in Japan. Here we read about the



gogyō no jin, five battle formations related to the five elements of wood, fire, earth, iron and water, a concept that drew upon notions of yin and yang. With the Heian Period we see the first appearance in Japanese of the hachijin, which were transmitted to Japan from Tang China by Oe Koretoki (888–963). They appear in the gunkimono (war tales) of the Gempei War, are also mentioned in the 14th-century *Taiheiki*, and are still being discussed by Edo Period military strategists as ‘ancient customs’ that still possessed validity. Certain other formations, most of which were variations on the hachijin, were developed and used during the Sengoku Period, although it is the hachijin, (hōshi, kakuyoku, gyōrin, engetsu, chōda, hōen, kōyaku, and gankō) that are mentioned most often in descriptions of Sengoku battlefields. They are illustrated in the diagram on page 38–39. In the list below the original Chinese and a translation of the title, or at the very least the suggested meaning, follows in brackets.

1. Hōshi (*fen shi* – the two characters combine the ideographs for an ancient halberd and an arrow, signifying the point of an arrow or spear). This was a favourite battle formation whereby arquebus fire first broke the enemy ranks, followed by a vigorous charge where the advancing samurai were arranged as a sharply pointed ‘flying wedge’. There are several references to the use of the hōshi in the Sengoku Period, and the *Kōyō Gunkan* associates it with Yamamoto Kansuke, the Takeda’s master of strategy. Its most spectacular adoption was when Shimazu Yoshihiro knew he was surrounded at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and placed himself at the head of 80 men in a hōshi formation to break out.
2. Kakuyoku (*he yi* – crane’s wing). This formation was essentially a defensive arrangement which allowed the possibility of rapid conversion into an offensive movement to surround an attacking enemy. The vanguard absorbed the enemy advance using missile weapons and skirmishing while the outstretched and reverse-curved ‘wings’, the great strength of the formation, spread out to envelop the enemy. It is mentioned in a 12th-century context in the *Gempei Seisuki*, when Ichijō Tadayori arranges his army in a kakuyoku. Centuries later it was adopted by Takeda Shingen at the fourth battle of Kawanakajima in 1561 when he took up the formation to receive and envelop what he thought would be a fleeing Uesugi army.
3. Gyōrin (*yu lin* – fish scales). This formation was the one to adopt if your army was outnumbered. It was intended to work like a blunted hōshi for an army that has not the power to risk everything in a rapid charge. Its units overlap and there is a strong centre. Minamoto Yoshinaka used the



In this detail from a painted screen depicting the battle of Nagakute we see a member of Tokugawa Ieyasu's tsukai-ban (Courier Guard) who acted as messengers on the battlefield and were distinguished by a flag bearing the character 'go'.

(text continues on page 46)



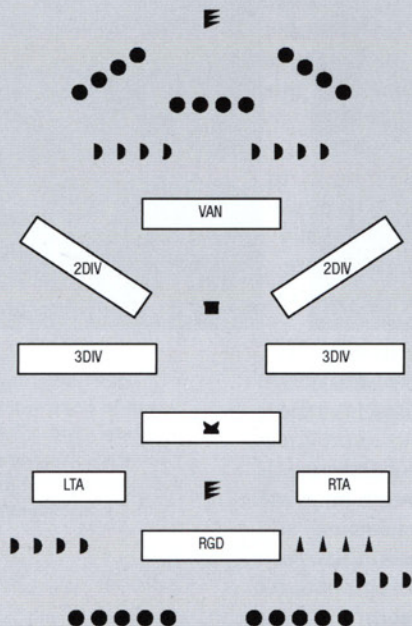
## Battle formations (2)

- Arquebusiers
- ▷ Bows
- ▲ Spears
- ✠ Sotaiشو

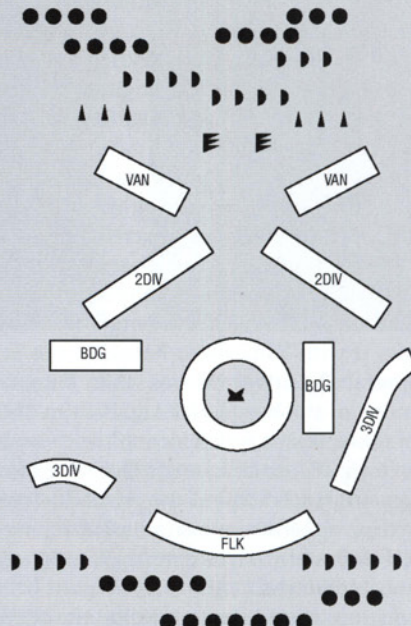
- Samurai/ashigaru
- ▬ Flags/banners
- War drum, conch, gong

- |        |                   |     |           |     |           |
|--------|-------------------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|
| VAN    | Vanguard          | LTA | Left army | RGD | Rearguard |
| 1-5DIV | 1st-5th divisions | SPT | Support   | AMB | Ambushers |
| MDIV   | Middle division   | FLK | Flanker   |     |           |
| RTA    | Right army        | BGD | Bodyguard |     |           |

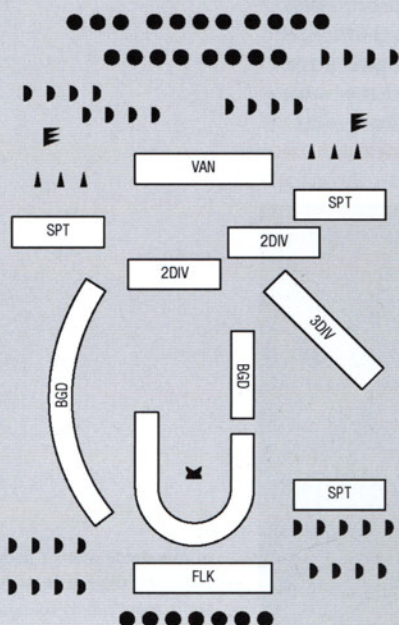
kotō



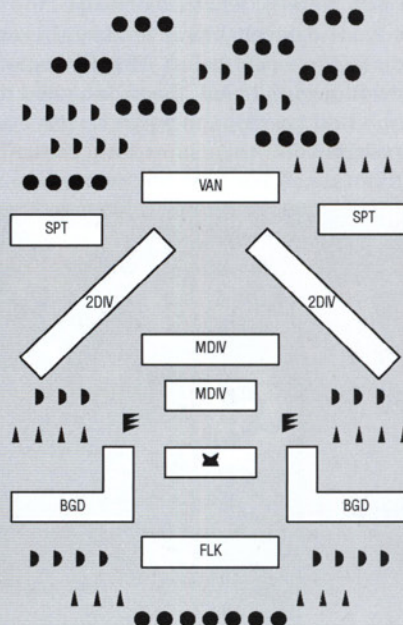
Garyū



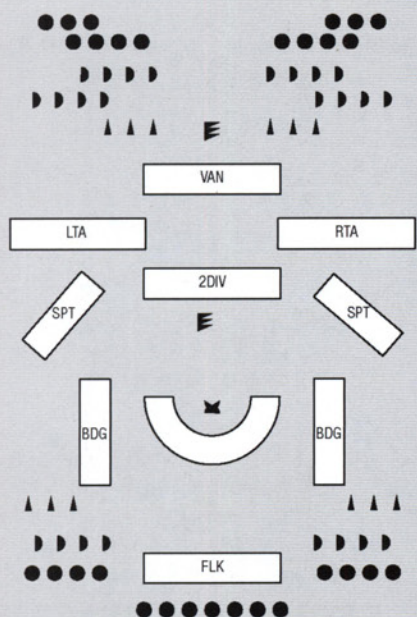
talmō



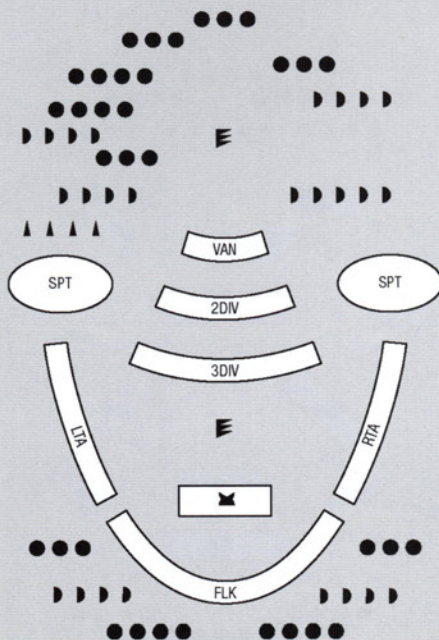
koran



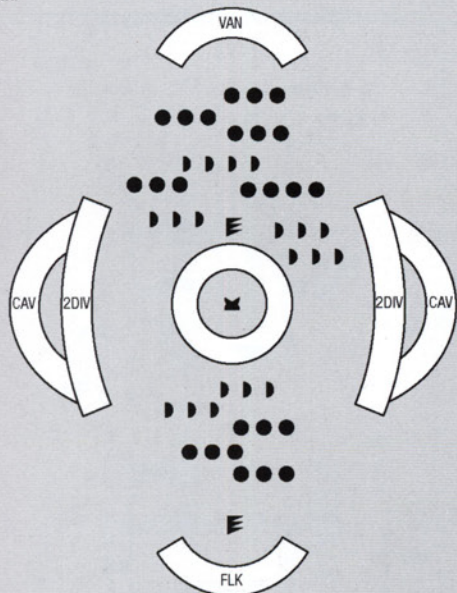
ranken



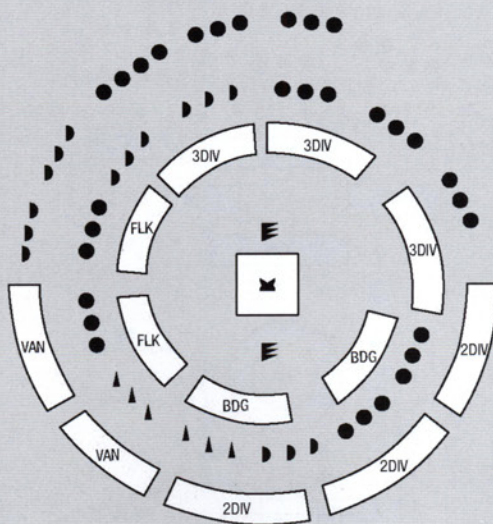
shogi-gashira



matsukawa



kuruma gakari





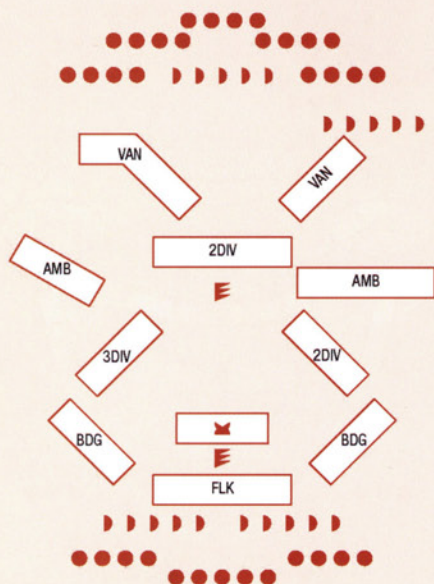
## Battle formations (3)

- Arquebusers
- ▷ Bows
- ▲ Spears
- ✠ Sotaisho

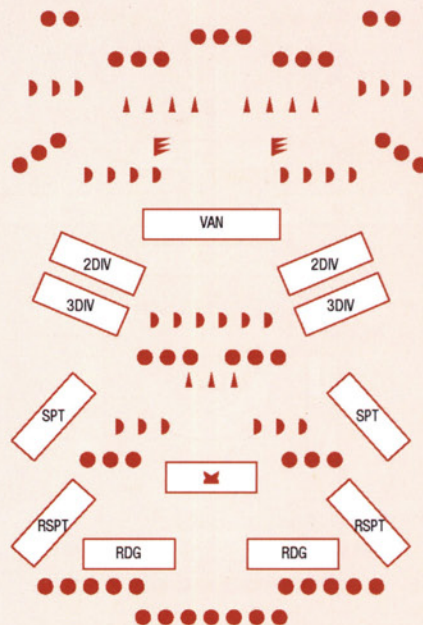
- Samurai/ashigaru
- ≡ Flags/banners
- War drum, conch, gong

- |        |                   |      |              |     |           |
|--------|-------------------|------|--------------|-----|-----------|
| VAN    | Vanguard          | LTA  | Left army    | BGD | Bodyguard |
| 1-5DIV | 1st-5th divisions | SPT  | Support      | RGD | Rearguard |
| MDIV   | Middle division   | RSPT | Rear support | AMB | Ambushers |
| RTA    | Right army        | FLK  | Flanker      |     |           |

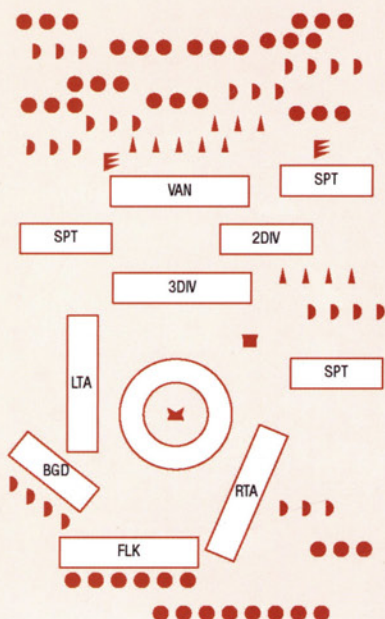
wachigai



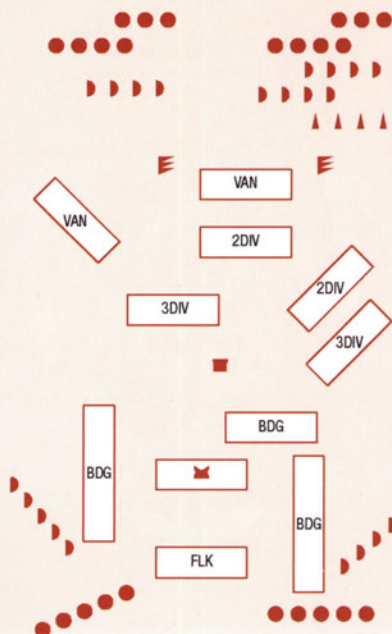
sei gankō choku



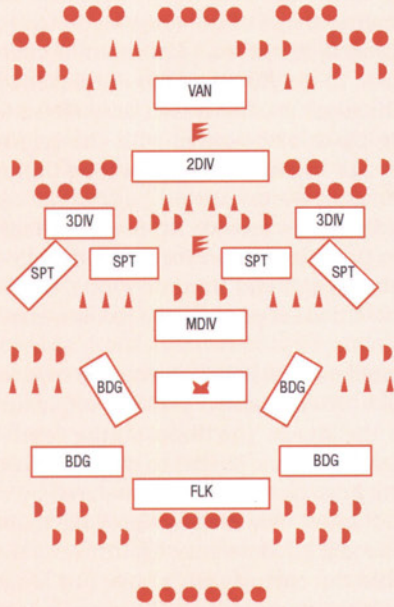
betsute naoshi



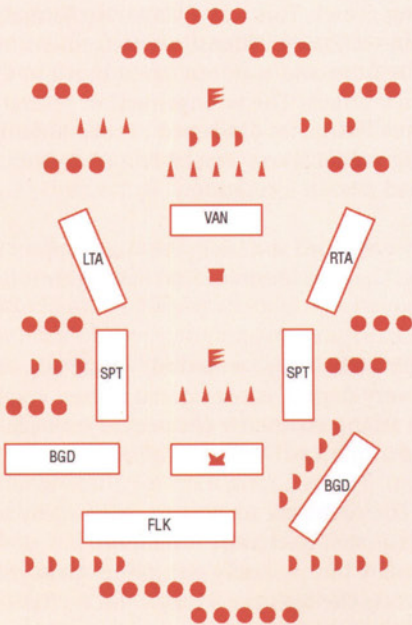
ryūkel



unryō



hichō



This illustration shows the layout of a further six of 22 set-piece battle formations that appear in diagrammatic form in Japanese accounts. They are described in detail in the text.



gyorin formation at the battle of Awazu in 1184. An attacking gyorin opposed to a defensive kakuyoku appears in *Hōgen Monogatari* in connection with the attack on the Shirakawa Palace in 1156, but we are told that because both sides were familiar with Chinese teachings the result of the manoeuvres was to produce a stalemate, a situation that was eventually resolved by setting fire to the palace. In the Sengoku Period the *Hōjō Godaiki* tells us that when Hojo Ujinao opposed Satake Yoshishige in 1585 the army was arranged in the gyorin kakuyoku formation, which probably means that the two armies used these opposing formations.

4. Engetsu (*yan yue* – crescent moon). This highly defensive formation, named from the asymmetric shape of the units stationed round the general, was the formation to adopt for a last stand. It could also withstand a gyorin attack. In the *Kōyō Gunkan* one Takeda general facing the possibility of a hōshi attack hastily creates an engetsu formation.
5. Chōda (*chang she* – long snake, also written with characters signifying ‘extended snake’). Although the name implies a long thin formation it is actually quite wide so that an enemy advance against either flank can be held in check. The middle troops provide support for the front and rear, while the front and rear provide support for the middle. Meanwhile, the vanguard, along with the second and third divisions, is held centrally to break out into an attack. Chōda is particularly recommended against the enveloping kakuyoku.
6. Hōen (*fang dan* – a square and a circle). This was the best formation for countering a hōshi attack. There were six ranks of arquebusiers and two of bows, angled to receive the attack. The troops in the centre were arranged like a keyhole (the square and circle shape) to absorb the impact of the charge. It is noted in the *Kōyō Gunkan* as one favoured by the Takeda.
7. Kōyaku (*hen ge* – yoke). Named after the wooden yoke (kubiki) used on an ox cart, this was considered a good defence against several styles of attack. The vanguard would hold the enemy as in a yoke just long enough to know their intentions. The commander could then react appropriately. In *Otomo Kōhaiki* we read that Tachibana Dōsetsu’s side was arranged in hōen formation at the battle of Nasumimatsu while Takahashi Shōsetsu’s army formed a kōyaku. Kōyaku was another good defence against a hōshi.
8. Ganko (*yan heng* – flying geese). This was a very deep formation that provided another flexible offensive/defensive arrangement of troops. Arquebuses screened the front and rear, but could move to the flanks if the enemy altered their attack. The arrangement of several ranks deep could also absorb a fierce charge, as happened at the battle of Anegawa in 1570. As an attacking model it was a good one to deploy against an enemy who had adopted a hōen formation.

Fourteen more formations were added at a later period and appear sporadically in Sengoku battle descriptions. They are illustrated in the diagrams on pages 42–43 and 44–45 as follows:

9. Kōtō (treading on a tiger’s tail). This formation, which takes its name from a proverb about being very daring, is considered to be a good defensive formation to use when facing an enemy with equal strength. The expression also appears in the 14th-century *Taiheiki*.
10. Garyō (reclining dragon). This is a formation for a side to adopt when fighting on a hillside. The divisions are able to move easily to new positions when there is a need to change formation.
11. Taimō (difficult to translate but probably signifying ‘great risk’). This formation is used to access the enemy’s strength on its flanks. Once a weak position is found the middle force is used to penetrate it.
12. Koran (war of the tiger). If the enemy is about to strike from both flanks,

this is the formation to adopt. As the leading division strikes the enemy's head the rear divisions move to take the enemy in the rear, just like a pouncing tiger.

13. Ranken (war of the sword). Very similar to koran, but with an increased capacity to receive a rear attack to improve its defensive value.
14. Shogi-gashira (captain of shogi). This is a useful formation when pursuing a retreating enemy. The units form an arc similar in appearance to the playing pieces in shogi, the Japanese equivalent of chess, and advance on the enemy. Meanwhile, the flanks, middle and rear press forward, expanding to the left or right as needed for envelopment.
15. Matsukawa (the bark of the pine tree). This unusual-looking formation places the mounted samurai, missile weapons and spearmen inside the formation. Its benefit is greater mobility.
16. Kuruma gakari (wheel). This formation, drawn like a spiral, envisages successive units of an army being brought against the enemy 'as the wheel winds on'. It is famously described in the *Kōyō Gunkan* as being the formation adopted by Uesugi Kenshin for his dawn attack against Takeda Shingen at the fourth battle of Kawanakajima in 1561. It is essentially an idealized representation of a tactical move that replaces tired units by fresh ones without breaking the momentum.
17. Wachigai (interlaced circles). This formation takes its name from the shape presented by front and rear of the formation. It is said to be of most use when one is outnumbered in woodland areas.
18. Sei gankō choku ('variation on gankō'). Resembling an elaborate gankō, it combines depth and flexibility.
19. Betsute naoshi ('different direction'). This is recommended for use by one's reserve troops if an enemy is drawing near, especially in the case of a disadvantage in height. There is a considerable defensive element to this formation, particularly around the person of the general.
20. Ryūkei (shape of a flowing current). This formation is the one to use in a fighting retreat. The inclined flanking units provide excellent cover from enemy harassment.
21. Unryō (cloud dragon). This formation is one to adopt when the enemy has the advantage of terrain such as steep, difficult or dangerous places, but not superiority in numbers.
22. Hichō (flying bird). Similar to unryō in appearance, this formation is to be adopted when the enemy has the advantage both of terrain and numbers.

All the above formations exist as diagrams in military treatises from which the accompanying illustrations have been created. Others appear in the literature only as descriptions, so their actual appearance can only be guessed at. These include:

23. Suki no seki (the vanguard's plough). Described in one chronicle as being a combination of gyōrin and kakuyoku.
24. Choun (bird cloud). Poetically described as being like the gathering and dispersal of birds or the changing appearance of clouds, this formation is identified in *Otomo Kōhaiki* when a particular army takes up its position on a hill.
25. Kanchi (sink into the ground). According to the *Otomo Kōhaiki* this formation was adopted by a unit at the battle of Hibikino which thereby avoided certain death.
26. Hidaka (high sun). This appears in the *Mōri Kaki* about the Mōri clan in Korea. Hidaka was adopted when a large Korean army cut the road along which the Mōri army was travelling.
27. Hyōri ('principle of law'). In *Momoi nikki* it is noted in use at the battle of Aoino.
28. Ryū (dragon). This also appears in the *Otomo Kōhaiki*.



29. Ryū no maru (dragon in a circle). This sounds like a variation on engetsu. It appears in the *Kōyō Gunkan* account of the fourth battle of Kawanakajima in 1561. After the initial action at early dawn on Hachimanbara the Takeda surprise attacking force arrived on the summit of Saijosan. The Uesugi position was deserted, and they could hear the noise of battle coming from the plain to the north, so the detached Takeda force flew down to the paths to hurry to the aid of Shingen's main body. But Uesugi Kenshin had prudently left the river guarded by 1,000 men under Amakasu Kagemochi who had adopted the ryū no maru formation. Here took place possibly the most desperate fighting of the day, with victory going eventually to the Takeda.
30. Hangetsu (three-day-old moon). This features in an account of the battle of Konodai. It must be almost the same as the engetsu, because it is recommended for withstanding a hōshi attack.
31. Minotenari (winnowing fan). A defensive formation described in one account as being enhanced by using bamboo bundles from the safety of which arquebuses were fired.

Although samurai armies were evidently well drilled, we must not think of them being able to change rapidly from any one of the 31 formations to any other. Some movements were more important than others and would be well rehearsed, such as to convert an army layout from the attacking gankō style to the more defensive unryō. These two styles were in fact so similar that a transformation would not have been a difficult proposition. To convert the outstretched 'crane's wings' of a kakuyoku to the wedge-shaped hōshi for a rapid penetration was also feasible for a well-drilled army. In an account in *Otomo Kōhaiki* of a battle at Kurume in Kyūshū we read that after assessment of the nature of the terrain Takahashi Shōsetsu's vanguard of 3,000 men were rearranged from a chōda formation to that of a garyū. *Otomo Kōhaiki* also gives advice about which of the eight hachijin formations best counters another:

*If the enemy adopts the gyorin formation then our side must spread out into the engetsu formation. If he adopts the hōen formation then we must adopt the gankō formation. If he adopts the kakuyoku formation then we must adopt the chōda formation. If he adopts the hōshi formation then we must adopt the kōyaku formation.*



A war drum is shown on the left-hand side of this detail from a painted screen depicting the battle of Nagashino. The drum is carried on one man's shoulders while his companion beats out the rhythm of the attack.

A modern reproduction of a general's war fan, having iron spines and the design of a red rising sun on gold.



### Battlefield communications and intelligence

Numerous men in a samurai army were used to provide intelligence and to facilitate communications between different units on the field, between allied armies, field headquarters and base castles, and between sections of a long army spaced out on the march. The first intelligence came from the mounted monomi (scouts), who served under a monomi bangashira. He would supervise their deployment, and be their first point of contact when they returned to the daimyō's headquarters with any information about the enemy's whereabouts. As mounted outriders they would also be the pathfinders for the army as it advanced into enemy territory. Other intelligence would be gathered by spies, including the famous ninja, who would sneak into an enemy's encampment to discover his plans.

The most important communication links on a battlefield were provided by the Courier Guards, while certain ashigaru in the army would have the responsibility of operating the audible signalling devices used on a battlefield. One commonly noted instrument was the horagai (conch shell trumpet) with its long, low mournful sound. Bells and gongs were less frequently used, but the sound most often heard on a battlefield would be produced by drums, which provided the means of raising an army's morale in addition to mere communication and signalling. All castles would have a drum tower, while small portable drums were carried on an ashigaru's back for a comrade, beat the drum. Larger ones were suspended from a pole carried by two men, while the largest of all were mounted on a wooden framework. Drums could also be used for time keeping in camp, a function more usually noted for bells and conches, but their most important role was that of encouraging an army and controlling the speed of its pace on active service, and by the middle of the Sengoku Period set drum calls existed for advancing and retreating in battle. The *Gunji Yoshu* gives more details. To summon one's allies the drum call was nine sets of five beats at an appropriate pace, and when advancing one's own troops and pursuing an enemy the call was nine sets of three beats, speeded up three or four times, and the giving of a war cry. War cries are also noted frequently in battle descriptions. 'Ei! Ei! O!' was the traditional shout, stimulating resolve along with the beating of drums.

Visual communications depended largely on the use of flags, a matter that came under the jurisdiction of the hata-bugyō. The uma-jirushi (standards) and massed nobori (banners) played a vital role in orientation on a battlefield. At an individual level even the lowliest ashigaru would have his daimyō's mon



lacquered on the front of his armour and his helmet and wear a coloured flag on the back of his armour to show his overall allegiance and his unit, the latter identification being provided by different coloured backgrounds. A similar system of back flags or other devices was worn by samurai, although the higher up the ranks one goes the less likely it is to find samurai wearing uniform 'munitions armour' and identical sashimono. In fact the highest-ranking samurai had unique hand-made armour and proclaimed their own personal identification by having a unique device emblazoned on their back flags. This could well have been the samurai's own name written in flowing script.

Flags or three-dimensional *uma jirushi* would be waved to attract attention or indicate movement, but the most important 'short-range' communication device was the war fan. All senior commanders carried one. The lowering of a general's war fan would be the usual signal to order an attack, a sign followed within a split second by the leaders of individual contingents who lowered their own fans. One variety of war fan consisted of a series of paper tassels on a short handle. Others were of the figure-of-eight shape used in the control batons held by modern sumo referees. Some were actual fans that opened and closed, except that the spines were made of iron so that the fan could double as a club. During the fourth battle of Kawanakajima in 1561 Takeda Shingen defended himself from sword blows using the edge of his fan until his hatamoto came to his rescue.

## Weaponry and the development of tactics

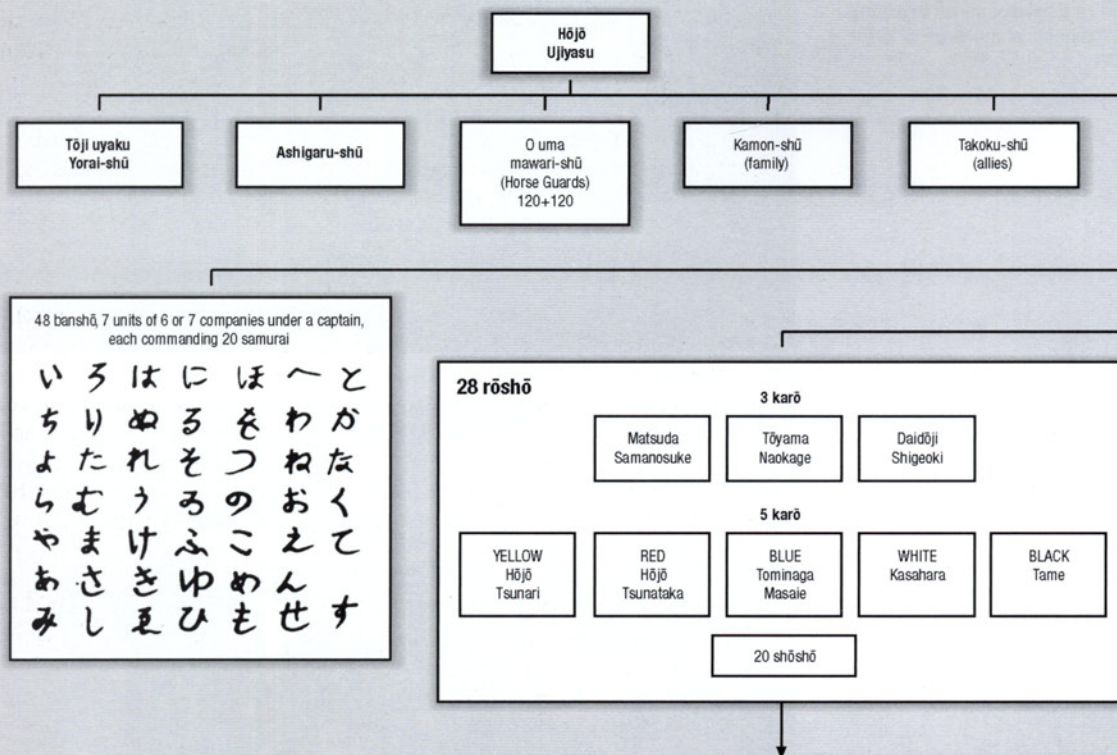
One interesting point arising from the illustrations of the battle formations shown here is the inclusion of ashigaru missile troops in the front ranks. This was not always the case. Centuries before the Sengoku Period began the samurai had been mounted archers, one aspect of the firm distinction between their elite status and that of the lowly footsoldier. Yet as early as the 14th century certain generals had realized that one way to use foot soldiers more effectively was to take away their edged weapons and give them bows to pour volleys of arrows into an enemy, just as the Mongol archers had done to the Japanese armies in 1274. This was the complete antithesis of the notion of the elite mounted archer delivering one arrow with great precision, and enemy mounted archers, of course, provided excellent targets for this new technique.

The *Taiheiki*, the chronicle of the 14th-century wars, refers to these lower-class archers as *shashu no ashigaru* (light foot shooters), the first use in Japanese history of the term *ashigaru*, a word that was later to be adopted to describe all infantry troops. But from the Onin War onwards the lawlessness of the Sengoku Period led to another source of supply for foot soldiers coming on stream, and a daimyō's loyal and long-standing infantry found themselves fighting beside, and often outnumbered by strangers who were casually recruited into an army, enticed by the prospect of loot. These men were also called *ashigaru*. They could fight well when the occasion demanded, but they were also notorious for deserting from an army.

The *ashigaru* therefore had to be disciplined. A uniform suit of armour emblazoned with the daimyō's mon was one step towards this. The other was to secure the *ashigaru*'s continued service through a mutual system of obligation and reward as exemplified by the Hojō's organization. The trained infantry units that resulted had considerable firepower, and for a samurai to respond merely by galloping forward and loosing a few arrows into the mass of foot soldiers was unlikely to discourage them unless they were already disordered, so a change in samurai weaponry occurred. The samurai were still the elite, but instead of being mounted archers they became mounted spearmen so that they could deliver a cavalry charge against the enemy's *ashigaru*. The Japanese *yari* (spear) was a fine weapon with a stout wooden shaft and a sharp blade, protected from the weather by a scabbard when not in use. Its keen edge allowed it to be used as a cutting weapon as well as a thrusting device, so we note spears being used more



## The army of Hōjō Ujiyasu in battle array, c. 1560



freely than a European lance, a word that is inappropriate to use as a translation of 'yari'.

A further challenge confronted the mounted samurai from the 1550s onwards when the ashigaru's bows were augmented by firearms. Arquebuses, otherwise known as matchlock muskets, were fired by means of a lighted smouldering match falling on to the touch hole and igniting the main charge that had been rammed down the barrel. They were slow to load and inaccurate to fire, but they revolutionized Japanese warfare because of their long range and the absence of a need for the years of training that produced good archers. Massed volley firing was shown from 1554 onwards to be the most effective way of using arquebuses, a tactic demonstrated most memorably at the famous battle of Nagashino in 1575.

Effective arquebus fire, much more so than archery, required its operators to be placed at the front of an army, the position traditionally occupied by the most loyal and glorious samurai. There was much honour attached to being the first to come to grips with an enemy, so to place the lowest-ranking troops in such a position was a challenge to samurai pride. The successful daimyō knew how to cope with this, and used the ashigaru's fire to break down the enemy ranks ready for a spirited charge by samurai, at which point the samurai spear and sword would dominate the fighting. Such considerations represented a very different attitude from the situation illustrated in the diagram on page 51, the battle layout of Hōjō Ujiyasu in c. 1560, which represents the age before firearms became commonplace. The new situation was realized perfectly at Nagashino. Large numbers of arquebusiers broke the impact of the Takeda cavalry charge rather than allowing the horsemen to break into and disorder the Oda lines. After this initial surprise a fierce hand-to-hand combat dominated by samurai spearmen and swordsmen then lasted for several hours.

The arrangement of the Hōjō army for battle under the third generation daimyō Hōjō Ujiyasu shows the importance then attached to mounted samurai. All the ashigaru are placed under one command along with the Horse Guards, family and allied contingents. The vanguard of the army are the 28 rōshō, while the most interesting are the 48 banshō, who wear sashimono flags bearing a different hiragana character from the Japanese phonetic alphabet. They are arranged in the 'i-ro-ha' pattern, the Japanese ABC, which means that when they were lined up the banshō spelled out a poem reading, 'Colours are fragrant, but they fade away/In this world of ours none lasts forever/Today cross the high mountain of life's illusion/And there will be no more shallow dreaming, no more drunkenness.' In future years the adoption of specialist ashigaru weapons squads and the widespread use of firearms would see the ashigaru taking their place at the front of a samurai army.



Two mounted spearmen in action wearing horo are shown in this section of a painted scroll depicting Oda Hidenobu at the siege of Gifu in 1600.



The arrangement of a daimyō's hatamoto is shown in this print of Uesugi Kenshin at the second battle of Kawanakajima in 1555. He has dispensed with the maku (field curtains) and sits confidently at the edge of the Saigawa, awaiting the major attack from Takeda Shingen that never in fact materialized.



By the 1590s arrangements that placed the ashigaru at the front of an army had become commonplace, showing a profound change in attitude by the daimyō. Not everyone approved, however, and there exists one scornful and snobbish comment in a later chronicle which laments that 'instead of ten or 20 horsemen riding out together from an army's ranks, there is now only this thing called ashigaru warfare'. This 'thing called ashigaru warfare' was of course nothing less than the emergence of large-scale infantry tactics in an exact parallel to the similar trend that was happening in 16th-century Europe.

One final point of detail concerns the length of the ashigaru's spears. The earliest ones had been the same length (about three or four metres) as samurai spears and were wielded just as freely in the conflicts of the Onin War. A noticeable lengthening of the shaft of the ashigaru weapon follows from about 1530 to produce the nagae-yari (long-shafted spear) which was more akin to a pike. Yet Japanese battlefields never saw the 'push of pike' that occurred in contemporary Europe, where hedgehogs of men collided with their front ranks and tried to force their opponents back. All accounts of Japanese warfare suggest that movement was much more fluid than in European infantry warfare, even though there were many occasions when ashigaru spearmen held close ranks to fend off mounted samurai.



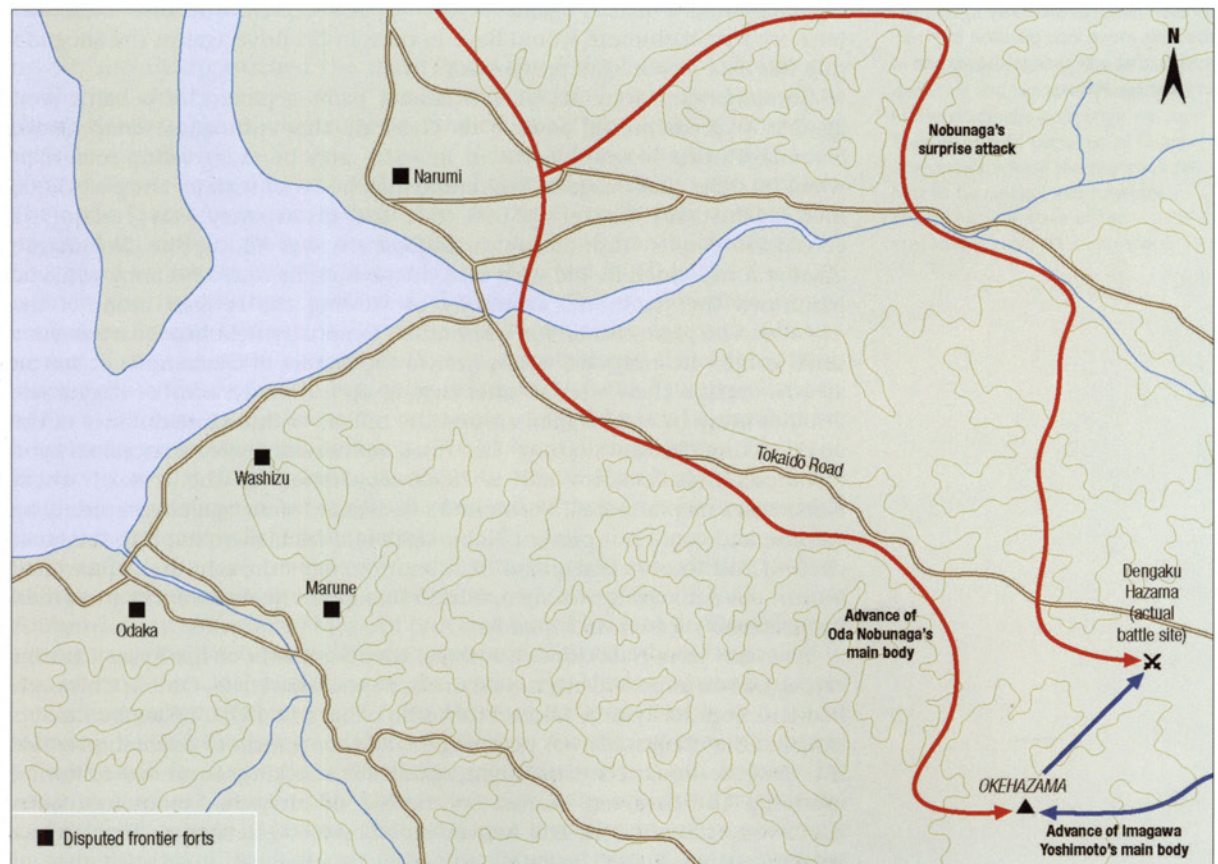
# Strategic engagement and battlefield movement

Thus armed and thus arranged, two or more samurai armies would clash in battle; but the above battle formations, even set-piece ones, were never static arrangements. They were instead dynamic systems that could be changed very rapidly when the army came to grips with the enemy. Nevertheless, the impression is often given that the only form of battlefield movement ever used was the spirited charge. Armies may be described as adopting such-and-such battle formations, but once the fighting gets under way the two armies seem to come to grips at a rush; and all semblance of command evaporates as the samurai undertake a series of individual combats. But if we read between the lines we discover much intelligent thought and planning being exercised by the leaders of samurai armies long before the enemy had even come into sight. These points will be illustrated in the following section, which is a series of case studies of good practice in samurai warfare.

## Surprise and ambush: Okehazama and Imayama

One way of overcoming the potential stalemate posed by the existence of set battlefield formations that supposedly cancelled each other out was to surprise

The battle of Okehazama, 1560, showing Nobunaga's surprise attack route.







The remarkable print shows the moment just before Oda Nobunaga's attack on Imagawa Yoshimoto at the battle of Okehazama. Beautifully stylized images of lightning crash around Yoshimoto's camp, while Nobunaga's forces, shown as shadowy figures at the rear, move into position for the assault that will change the course of Japanese history.

one's enemy. Examples exist throughout Japanese history, but the most decisive instance of the tactic was undoubtedly the famous battle of Okehazama in 1560. It was won by Oda Nobunaga against the most powerful daimyo among his near neighbours, Imagawa Yoshimoto (1519–60). In 1554 and 1558 Nobunaga had suffered attacks from Yoshimoto, whose growing confidence, boosted by judicious alliances, was such that by 1560 he was contemplating a march against Kyōto, Japan's capital. The first unfriendly territory that Yoshimoto would have to cross in his drive against the Shogun's rule was Oda Nobunaga's province of Owari.

Contemporary accounts of Okehazama paint a picture of a battle won against overwhelming odds. Ota Gyūichi, the author of *Shincho-kōki*, Nobunaga's first biography written in 1610, may be exaggerating somewhat when he states that Imagawa Yoshimoto marched west with an army of 45,000 men against his master's 2,000, but the discrepancy was certainly a considerable one. Yoshimoto's first objective was to capture Nobunaga's frontier forts, which he did with ease, after which he rested his army while he performed the traditional ceremony of viewing the severed heads of the defeated. The place chosen for Yoshimoto's temporary field headquarters was a small gorge with restricted access near to the hamlet of Okehazama. It was an area Nobunaga knew well, so after rigging up a dummy army of flags a safe distance away he led his men around the hills to within close distance of the unsuspecting Imagawa army. His final movements were concealed by a fortuitous thunderstorm and a fierce downpour, at the end of which Nobunaga's men attacked. Yoshimoto's bodyguard were caught completely by surprise and could not prevent Nobunaga's raid from sweeping into the inner circle of Yoshimoto's bodyguard. Yoshimoto initially thought that a brawl had broken out among his own men, but no sooner did he discover the truth than his head was sliced from his body.

Ten years later Nabeshima Naoshige, then a retainer of the Ryūzōji family, carried out an almost identical raid under cover of darkness. Otomo Chikasada had laid siege to Ryūzōji Takanobu's castle of Saga in 1570. Takanobu's scouts reported that Chikasada was planning to hold some form of celebration inside his field headquarters that night, prior to attacking Saga the following morning. The base was located on the hill of Imayama, about four miles northwest of Saga castle, and was defended by 3,000 hatamoto. That night a detachment of Ryūzōji samurai and ashigaru, keeping their advantage of





height, silently approached the maku and waited until dawn. The Otomo troops had clearly enjoyed their pre-battle party, and were sleeping off its effects. Even the guards must have been lulled into a false sense of security by their overwhelming numbers, because Nabeshima Naoshige ordered his arquebusiers to open fire, and 800 samurai charged down into the position. They first kicked over and extinguished all the Otomo's pine torches that provided the only night-time illumination, and then began to cut down the bodyguard hatamoto. Otomo Chikasada was slain and 2,000 out of the 3,000 men in the headquarters area were also killed. Taking advantage of the confusion, Ryūzōji Takanobu led a sortie out of the castle against a different section of the siege lines. So devastating was the night raid that Otomo Sorin ordered the withdrawal of the rest of his troops and left the Ryūzōji well alone. Just as at Okehazama the defeated commander was killed when he should have been totally protected by his hatamoto. The element of surprise was clearly the key to victory, but the decision to launch both attacks depended totally on the gathering of intelligence by scouts who had risked their lives by approaching so near to the enemy field headquarters.

To ambush an army on the march was a much more difficult proposition, but the tactic almost succeeded at the battle of Mimasetoge in 1569. Takeda Shingen's army had entered Musashi province out of Kai and first laid siege to Hachigata castle, defended by Ujijyasu's third son Ujikuni, which they failed to capture, and then Takiyama, held by the second son Ujiteru, where they were similarly repulsed. To carry on from there to Odawara, with two intact fortresses behind him, was a surprising decision for the experienced Takeda Shingen, and he certainly seems to have outreached himself, because his resulting siege of Odawara only lasted three days, after which he burned the castle town outside Odawara and withdrew. Subsequent events strongly indicate that Hōjō Ujijyasu quickly realized that he had been given an excellent

In this detail from a painted screen depicting the battle of Sekigahara in the Watanabe collection we see the maku (field curtains) of Otani Yoshitsugu, whose leprosy required him to be carried in a palanquin, shown here in place of the customary general's camp stool.



opportunity for a decisive showdown with the Takeda. He also appreciated that this would have to be done in the mountains if the Hojō were not to face the famous Takeda cavalry on the flat plains of Musashi province. The plan was for Ujiteru and Ujikuni to ambush the Takeda as they made their way home through the pass of Mimasetoge. This was carried out, and may well have succeeded until, after a day of fighting, Yamagata Masakage, one of the Takeda's most experienced generals, launched a devastating flank attack on the Hojō left wing. The main body of the Takeda then broke through and escaped to Kofu.

## Fighting by night: the three Japanese classics

Night-time manoeuvres such as those that were carried out at Imayama provide the best evidence that the finest samurai armies were well drilled and well disciplined. Imayama was just a raid, but three major night-time battles occurred during the Sengoku Period. In 1545, Uesugi Tomosada marched against the Hojō's Kawagoe castle, which was defended by Ujiyasu's brother Hojō Tsunanari. Tsunanari's garrison was only 3,000 strong, but managed to hold out against 85,000 besiegers. Hojō Ujiyasu marched to Kawagoe's relief with 8,000 soldiers, and a brave samurai managed to slip through the Uesugi siege lines to tell his brother that they were on their way. The relief force was another pitifully small army, but intelligence brought back from the allied lines by a ninja suggested that the besiegers were so confident of victory that their vigilance had slackened. Ujiyasu consequently decided to make a night attack – a risky tactic at any time, but it was to be coordinated with a sortie out of the castle by Tsunanari. To help matters further Ujiyasu issued orders that his men should not overburden themselves by wearing heavy armour, and, most

The famous single combat between Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen during the fourth battle of Kawanakajima in 1561. Such an event was very rare, because a daimyō's hatamoto kept him well protected, but at Kawanakajima the manoeuvres carried out by both armies under conditions of darkness made such a surprise more likely.

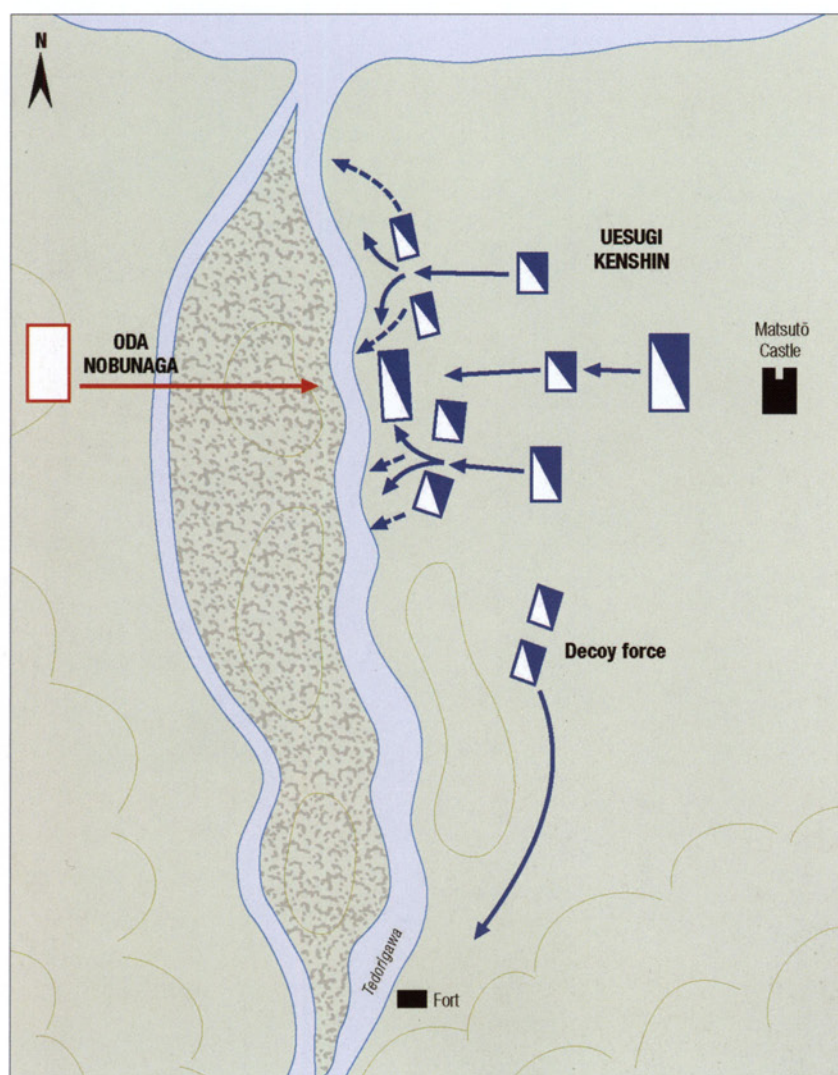




surprising of all, that no one was to waste time taking heads. Typically for the Hojo, there was full compliance with this order, and with the odds of ten to one against them the enemy coalition was utterly destroyed and the Hojo control of the Kantō was confirmed.

Even more dramatic was the fourth battle of Kawanakajima in 1561, when both sides arranged their troops in darkness for a dawn attack. This could only have been achieved if every officer knew exactly where to place his men. At midnight Takeda Shingen led 8,000 men out of Kaizu castle across the Chikumagawa to Hachimanbara. Here he drew up his army in a kakuyoku formation to allow him to surround the advancing enemy. But Uesugi Kenshin was already waiting for him, having carried out another march in the dark, and attacked using the kuruma gakari formation. Various fanciful geometric models have been suggested to show how Kenshin's army was rotated like a huge water wheel, depositing one unit after another against Shingen's front line. What probably happened was that Kenshin wheeled successive units in turn and replaced one unit by the section behind them.

Tedorigawa in 1578 provides the final example of a night-time manoeuvre. Oda Nobunaga had invaded Kaga province, so Uesugi Kenshin went into Kaga to meet him and based himself and 30,000 troops at the castle of Matsutō.



The battle of Tedorigawa, 1577.  
Note Kenshin's detached decoy force, which fooled the great Oda Nobunaga.



Nobunaga had 18,000 men within a total army of about 50,000, and the armies met across the Todorigawa. Kenshin anticipated that Nobunaga would try to move across the river by night for a dawn attack on Matsutō. He therefore detached a small decoy force in sight of Nobunaga and moved it up towards a small fort he had built at the head of the river. This gave Nobunaga the impression that Kenshin had split his forces, and encouraged Nobunaga to make a frontal assault straight across the river. The result was one of the classic night battles of Japan. Kenshin's force, in three forward units with a main body in reserve, absorbed Nobunaga's advance. The main body then moved in and defeated Nobunaga's army.

## Firepower: the genius of Oda Nobunaga

Todorigawa was Oda Nobunaga's only defeat. His greatest victory was the battle of Nagashino in 1575, achieved through the use of firearms, the weapons with



Arquebus troops in action at the battle of Nagashino. Protected by the loose palisades, Nobunaga's arquebusiers fired volleys of bullets to break the impact of the charge of the mighty Takeda cavalry.

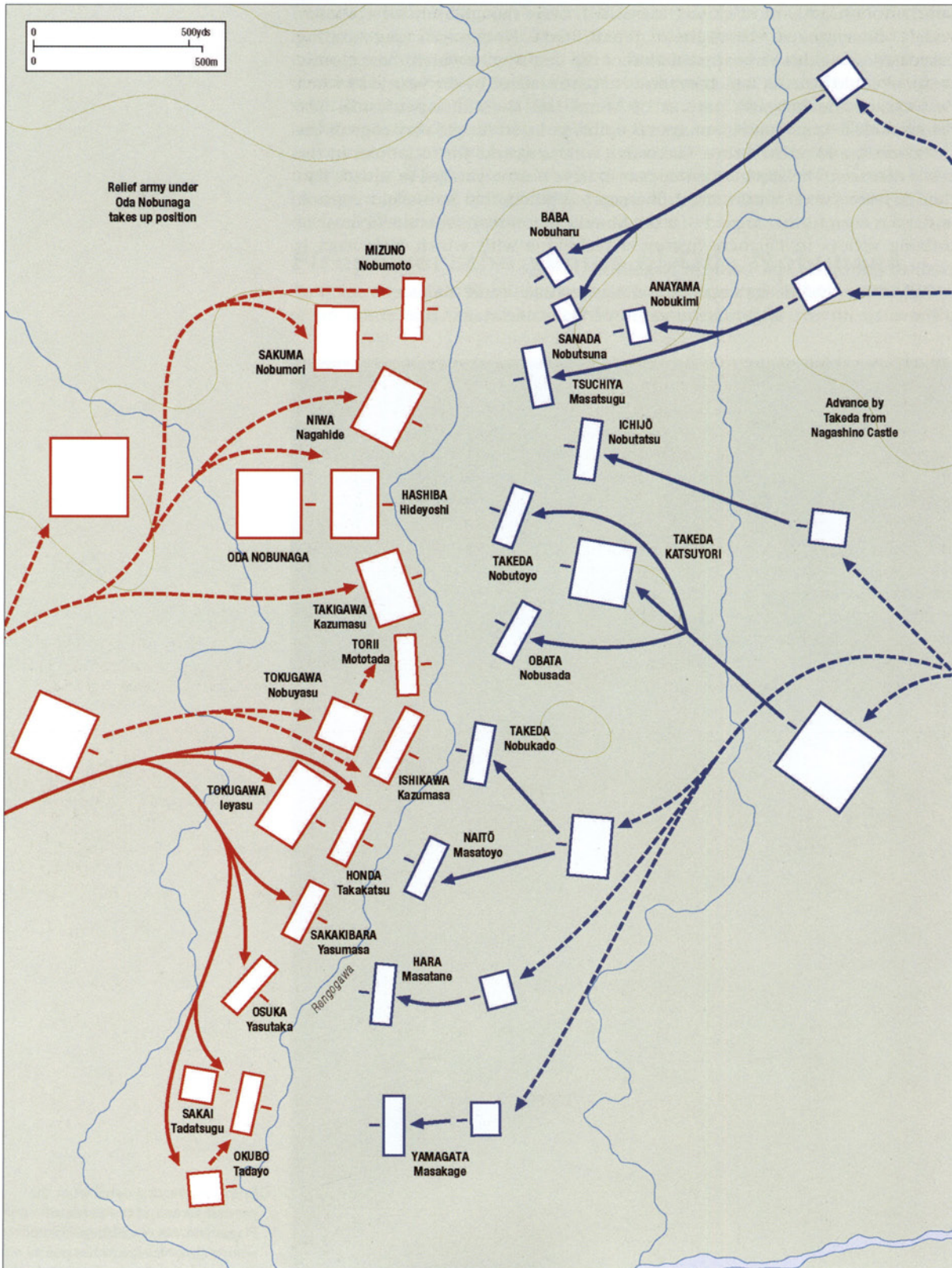
which Nobunaga is most closely associated, even though they were already widely disseminated throughout Japan. Oda Nobunaga's outstanding contribution was his early appreciation of the best way in which these clumsy weapons could be used, which he seems to have realized by the year 1554 when he attacked the Imagawa outpost of Muraki on the Chita peninsula. The *Shincho-koki* tells us that Nobunaga set up his position on the very edge of the castle moat, and ordered three successive volleys against the loopholes in the castle defences. The arquebusiers appear to have been organized in squads that fired in succession, confirming Nobunaga's sophisticated battlefield control, and it has been further argued that the Muraki action represents the first use of rotating volleys in Japanese history, a technique with which Nobunaga is credited during his epic battle of Nagashino.

Nagashino, Nobunaga's operational masterstroke, came about as a result of a move to lift the siege of the castle of the same name that stood on a



In this interesting detail from the painted screen of the battle of Nagashino we see Maeda Toshiie, whom Oda Nobunaga has put in charge of one group of arquebus troops, sitting on his horse behind the defensive palisade.



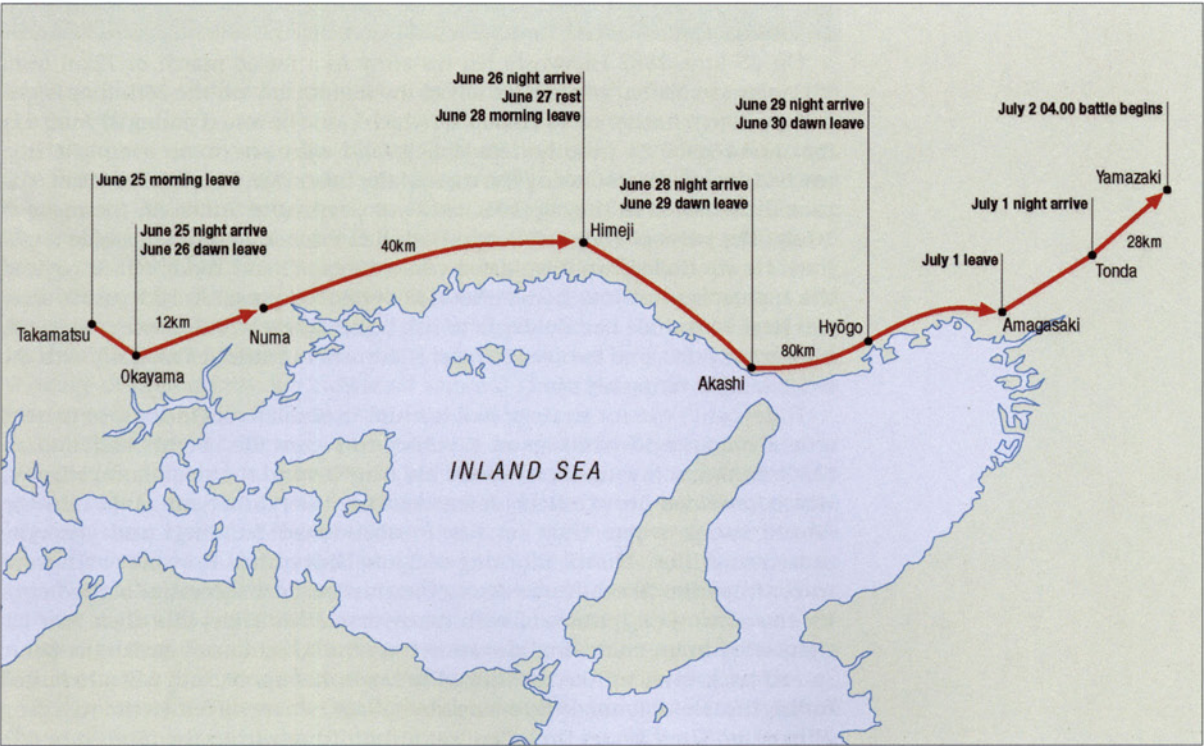




promontory where two rivers met. It had been holding out against the army of Takeda Katsuyori, the heir of the famous Shingen. The great strength of the Takeda lay in their mounted samurai, whose ability to overrun and disorder foot soldiers, even when they were armed with arquebuses, had been demonstrated as recently as the battle of Mikata ga Hara in 1572. On approaching Nagashino Nobunaga made his plans accordingly. First, instead of simply falling on to the rear of Katsuyori's army, he took up a planned position a few kilometres away at Shidarahara, where the topography enabled him to restrict enemy cavalry movement. Bounded by mountains to the north and a river to the south, Nobunaga's position was not susceptible to outflanking manoeuvres. Second, Nobunaga erected a loose palisade of lashed timber that provided protection to his army while allowing some gaps through which a counter attack might be launched. Third, he arranged a welcome for Takeda Katsuyori in the form of massed ranks of arquebusiers.

The popular view of Nobunaga's victory at Nagashino is that it came about entirely as a result of the third of these factors, with the arquebusiers divided into three sections, firing in rotation. This has become the accepted view of Nagashino, and the notorious final scene depicting the battle in Akira Kurosawa's film *Kagemusha* makes the action look as though the bullets were delivered by machine guns. The reality of the situation is somewhat less dramatic, yet it detracts nothing from Nobunaga's generalship on the day. The first point concerns the number of arquebuses deployed. *Mikawa Go Fudo-ki* says 3,000. The more reliable *Shincho-koki* has 1,000. Nor need we necessarily conclude from the observation that different squads of arquebusiers fired alternate volleys that this was an early application of the system of rotating volleys. Such a scheme, associated in particular with the military innovations of Maurice of Nassau, required the front rank to discharge their pieces then move to the rear to allow the second rank to do the same, a manoeuvre known as the counter-march. Yet even the Dutch were to discover that a minimum of six ranks, and preferably ten, were required to keep up a constant fire.

Hideyoshi's forced march along the coast of the Inland Sea from Takamatsu to Yamazaki in 1582.





At Nagashino Nobunaga did not possess the resources to mimic machine guns. Many of the arquebusiers he arranged behind the palisades were not his own troops but had been supplied by allies and subordinates a few days before the battle took place. There was therefore no time to drill them in the counter-march. Alternate volleys were certainly delivered, but should be understood as a response to the successive waves of attack launched by the Takeda cavalry under the iron discipline of the five bugyō whom Nobunaga had placed in command of the squads. *Shincho-koki* records each of the five attacks, naming the Takeda generals who advanced to the beat of drums and were met by gunfire. *Mikawa Go Fudoki* breaks the action down further, noting that 300 arquebusiers in the sector held by the Okubo brothers faced a charge by 3,000 men under Yamagata Masakage. Interestingly, this is precisely the situation illustrated on the contemporary painted screen of the battle of Nagashino owned by the Tokugawa Art Museum in Nagoya. Horses are shown falling dead and throwing their riders, classic images of a broken cavalry charge. Yet the battle of Nagashino still had several hours to run, and from this point onwards the spears and swords of the samurai came into their own. Protected by the long spears of other foot soldiers, whose contribution to the battle was in no way inferior to their arquebus-firing colleagues, Nobunaga's armies fought the Takeda on a battlefield of their own choosing, and Katsuyori was decisively defeated by a skilled general who used a combination of arms to its best advantage.

### **Rapid response: Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 1582–83**

One way in which surprise could be brought to bear upon a battlefield situation was to make a forced march against an unprepared enemy. Nobunaga's successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the master of strategy, did this twice during the first year of his rise to power following the death of Nobunaga in 1582.

When Nobunaga died Hideyoshi was conducting the siege of Takamatsu castle, and realized that only the swiftest of responses could prevent the renegade general Akechi Mitsuhide from consolidating his position. Taking great pains to keep the reason for his departure secret from the enemy, Hideyoshi hastily patched up a negotiated settlement and sent loyal generals on ahead as an advance guard.

On 25 June 1582 Hideyoshi led his army in a forced march of 12km from Takamatsu to Numa, where they stayed the night. Early on the 26th they began a 40km march further on to Himeji, in which castle he rested during 27 June. On the morning of 28 June he left Himeji, and with one more overnight stop reached Amagasaki, following the coast of the Inland Sea for a total of 80km. The pace then slowed as they approached Kyōto, resting at Tonda on the night of 1 July. The news of Hideyoshi's approach had reached Akechi Mitsuhide on 29 June. He controlled two dilapidated castles (Shōryūji and Yodo), which covered the approaches to Kyōto from either side of the Yodogawa. As Hideyoshi's army was large Mitsuhide had no desire to risk being caught inside either castle, with his force divided, and resolved to meet Hideyoshi in battle at Yamazaki, with the two castles covering his rear.

Hideyoshi's eye for strategy had led him to similar conclusions, so he sent a detachment under Nakagawa Kiyohide to secure the heights of Tennozōzan (270m). Akechi Mitsuhide stationed his army behind the small Enmyōjigawa, which provided an excellent defensive line. Hideyoshi sent ninja into the Akechi camp, where they set fire to abandoned buildings and generally caused confusion. On the morning of 2 July Hideyoshi's army moved forward to confront the Akechi force across the river while a successful battle began for the control of Tennozōzan, with many casualties. Hideyoshi then sent his right wing in an encircling movement. As the Akechi army broke the panic spread back even to Akechi Mitsuhide's own hatamoto, and Mitsuhide fled for his life. He only made it to a nearby village, where he fell victim to a gang of bandits. Their leader thrust a spear at him from within the protection of a





Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the master of strategy, mounted on his war horse and accompanied by his 'thousand golden gourd' standard at the battle of Shizugatake in 1583.

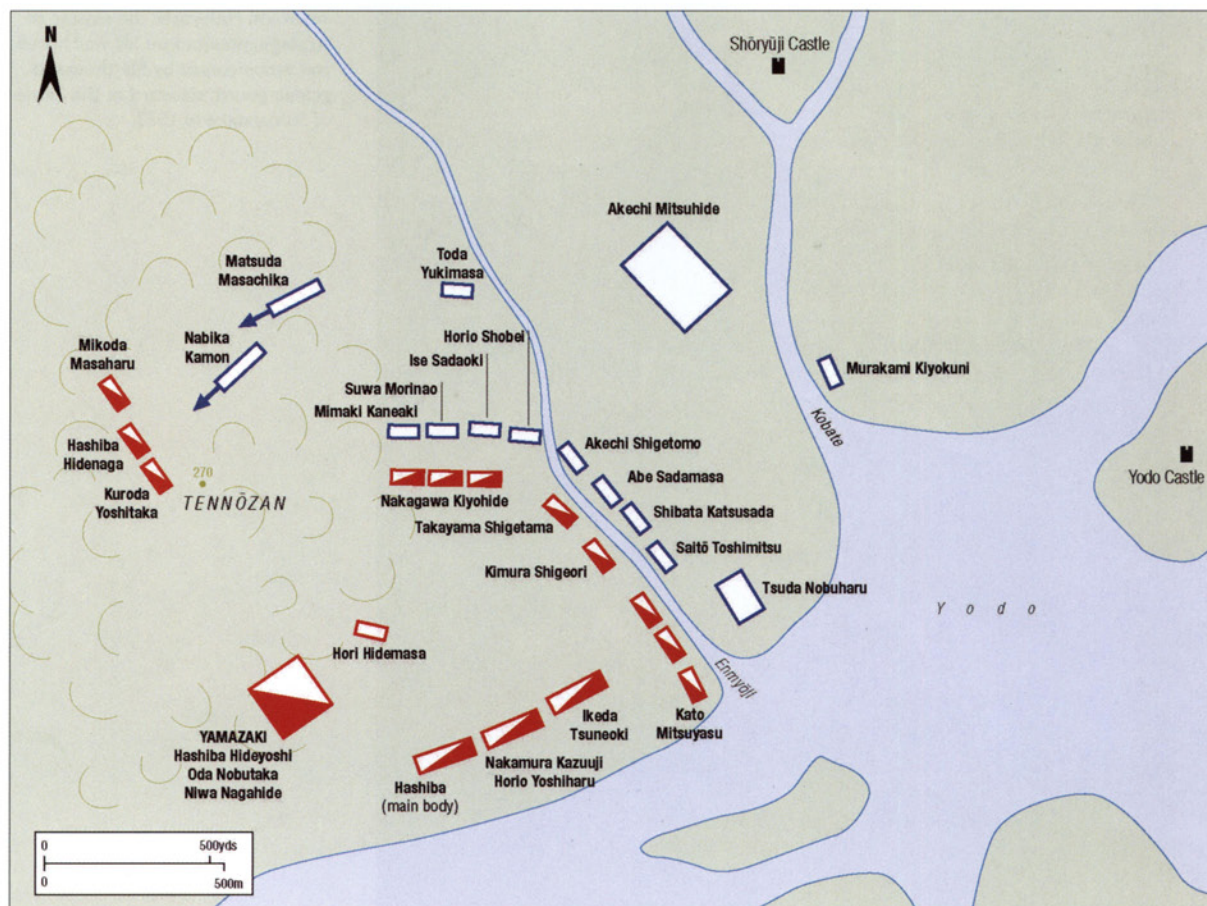
bamboo grove, and he fell dead from his horse, 13 days after arranging the death of Nobunaga.

Hideyoshi's victory over the '13-Day Shogun' depended upon several factors. The first was his bold decision to negotiate an end to the siege of Takamatsu and force-march his entire army back to Kyōto. This gave him an overwhelming superiority in troop numbers, but he was also able to control the ground on which the battle would be fought by advancing rapidly. The battle was clearly well conducted, with good coordination between Hideyoshi's headquarters and the generals who only had part of the overall picture, so we can be sure that Hideyoshi's Courier Guards would have kept themselves busy. Nor was there a shortage of opportunity for individual samurai glory, but at no time did this interfere with the primary aim of the engagement.

Yamazaki placed Hideyoshi in a position from where he might take over Nobunaga's domains for himself. If his former colleagues had joined forces against him at that point then his chances would have been very slim, because between them they had Hideyoshi surrounded. Oda Nobuo was based in his late father's castle of Kiyosu that sat squarely on the Tokaidō to the east, while Oda Nobutaka dominated the Nakasendō to the northeast from mighty Gifu. Further north still was Shibata Katsuie, who could march on Kyōto from Kitano-sho (modern Fukui) in Echizen province, while another general, Takigawa Kazumasu, was located at the fortress of Nagashima on the Pacific coast.

Fortunately for Hideyoshi, Oda Nobutaka foolishly decided to attack before the snow had melted in the Echizen mountain passes, which meant that his

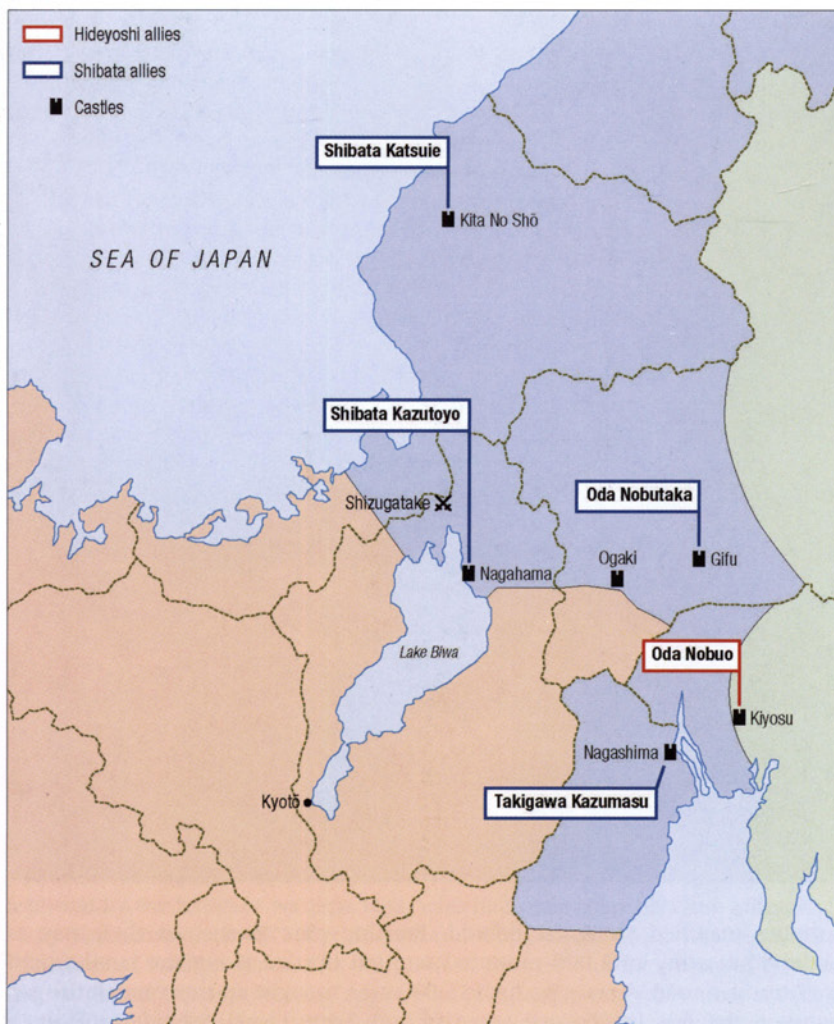




The battle of Yamazaki, 1582.

ally Shibata Katsuie could not move to help him. Fully appreciating this point, Hideyoshi moved rapidly against Gifu, and such was his reputation for successful siegework that Nobutaka immediately surrendered. Upon his return to Kyōto Hideyoshi learned that Takigawa Kazumasu was planning a two-pronged attack in conjunction with Shibata Katsuie's son Katsutoyo. Katsutoyo was based in Nagahama castle on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa and was unaffected by the winter weather. Hideyoshi first marched to Nagahama and bought its surrender with a large bribe. With his rear secure, and the hapless Oda Nobuo still thinking that Hideyoshi was doing all this on his behalf, Hideyoshi defeated Takigawa.

The spring of 1583 was now on its way, and the thaw would free Shibata Katsuie from his frozen fastness. To guard against this Hideyoshi sent several detachments of troops north of Lake Biwa to strengthen the garrisons of the mountain-top forts that covered the road to the north. When Shibata Katsuie led his army south, these castles provided a genuine barrier, so Katsuie set up his positions on other mountains opposite. Hideyoshi then marched north to join his frontier force, but no sooner did he arrive at the nearest town to the fortress line than he had to leave to face a serious threat to his rear, because Oda Nobutaka in Gifu, whom Hideyoshi had generously allowed to retain possession both of the castle and his own head, regretted his earlier surrender and threw his weight behind the northern army. Hideyoshi was therefore forced to march back and along the Nakasendo with 20,000 men to besiege Gifu once again, but he wisely based himself in the nearby fortress on Ogaki, which lay on the same road, just in case Shibata Katsuie should break through in the north. Hideyoshi left on 17 April, and started the attack on Gifu early on 19 April.



Hideyoshi's strategic problem and the Shizugatake campaign, 1583. Note how Hideyoshi's main challenge came from the east in the persons of Nobunaga's other generals. Had they coordinated their efforts Hideyoshi would never have gained control of Japan. As it was, he picked them off one by one.

Shortly after Hideyoshi's departure Shibata's vanguard began the serious business of capturing the frontier forts. At first all went well for Sakuma Morimasa, who captured all of Hideyoshi's castles west of the road except for Shizugatake, upon which he could now concentrate all his forces. Shibata Katsuie, however, was very concerned about how vulnerable Sakuma Morimasa now was to a counter attack. Hashiba Hidenaga, Hideyoshi's half brother, was only just across the valley with 15,000 men, and Katsuie also knew that another of Hideyoshi's allies, Niwa Nagahide, was not too far away on Lake Biwa with 2,000 men. There was also the question of Toyotomi Hideyoshi himself, but intelligence reports told Katsuie that Hideyoshi and his 20,000-strong army were fully engrossed with the siege of Gifu. Nevertheless, the prudent Katsuie sent a messenger to Sakuma ordering him to abandon his open siege lines for the security of newly captured Oiwa. But Sakuma disobeyed the orders of his commanding officer and stayed fighting. Six times Shibata Katsuie sent the order to withdraw, and six times Sakuma refused to comply.

By now a messenger had galloped the 43km to Ogaki. When asked if Sakuma had withdrawn into a castle the messenger replied that he had not. Hideyoshi's long military experience had told him that Sakuma Morimasa was dangerously exposed. So very early in the morning of April 20 Hideyoshi made ready to rush to Shizugatake. It was a great gamble. The only way he could achieve surprise was by taking an entirely mounted army with him while the infantry and



Although seated somewhat forlornly on the ruins of his castle of Kita-no-shū, Shibata Katsuie has been honoured by the modern city of Fukui that replaced his headquarters. Katsuie was a key member of Oda Nobunaga's kashidan and served his master even after Nobunaga's death.



supplies marched along far behind. Burning pine torches lit their way as Hideyoshi's army of 1,000 mounted samurai hurried along the familiar and well-trodden road. A main body of 15,000 men brought up the rear, but the gap between the two lengthened every second. From Ogaki the ride took them through Sekigahara, a village whose name was to become very familiar 20 years later, and on to the fortress line, which they reached just five hours after leaving Ogaki.

The first that Sakuma Morimasa knew of Hideyoshi's arrival was the sudden appearance of 1,000 burning pine torches down in the valley. Hideyoshi paused only to collect Hashiba Hidenaga's troops and to be apprized of the situation. Then, following a signal from a conch shell trumpet blown, it is said, by Hideyoshi himself, his eager and impatient men poured up the mountain paths towards Shizugatake and Sakuma's siege lines. The result was the utter defeat of Sakuma's army, who fled in terror to the north. Hideyoshi's army followed in hot pursuit, and when the news of the advance was brought to Shibata Katsuie in Kita-no-shū he committed suicide.

## Shock and awe: the conquests of Shikoku, 1578 and 1585

This section will show how Chōsokabe Motochika took 25 years to conquer Shikoku using an old-fashioned mixture of part-time samurai, deceptive alliances and amazing ignorance; and then lost it in one month to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who used psychological warfare to demoralize his opponents followed by the application of overwhelming force, a tactic that only a general with his vast resources could contemplate. The contrast between the two



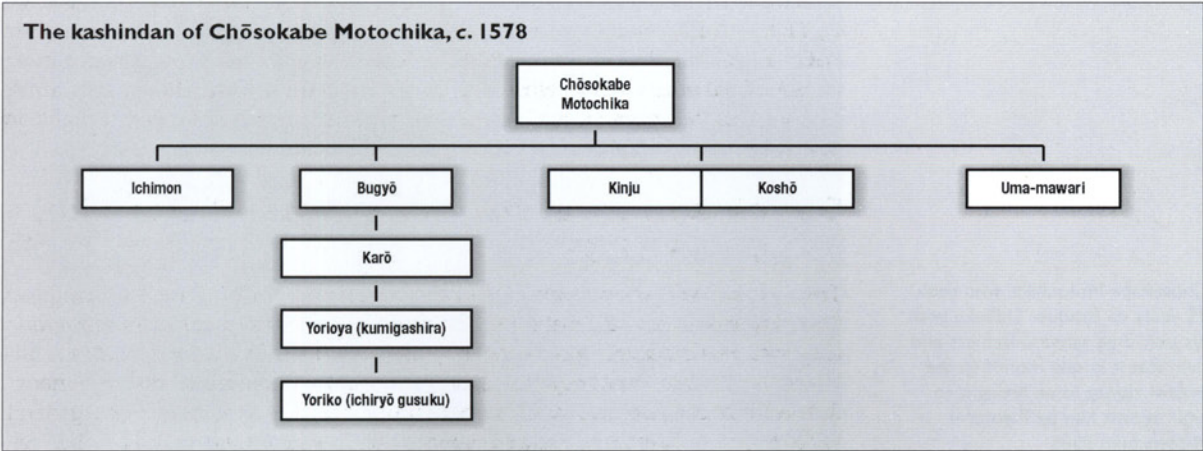
approaches provides a fascinating illustration of the evolution of strategy and tactics in samurai armies during the Sengoku Period.

Shikoku is the smallest of Japan's four main islands. Although only separated from the 'mainland' of Honshū by the Inland Sea and a myriad of tiny islands, the territories owned by the various daimyō within Shikoku's four provinces enjoyed a certain degree of independence until one of them, Chōsokabe Motochika (1539–99), began to emulate his contemporaries in the rest of Japan by expanding his domains at their expense. The basis of Motochika's army was laid down by his father Kunichika (1503–56) and is shown in the diagram on page 67. At its core fought the famous *ichiryō gusoku*, 'one suit of armour', which was all the defensive armament these part-time farmers and soldiers possessed. What they lacked in equipment they made up for in enthusiasm, and it was said of these 'ever-ready' stalwarts that they tended the rice fields with their sandals tied to the shafts of their spears that they had thrust into the mud.

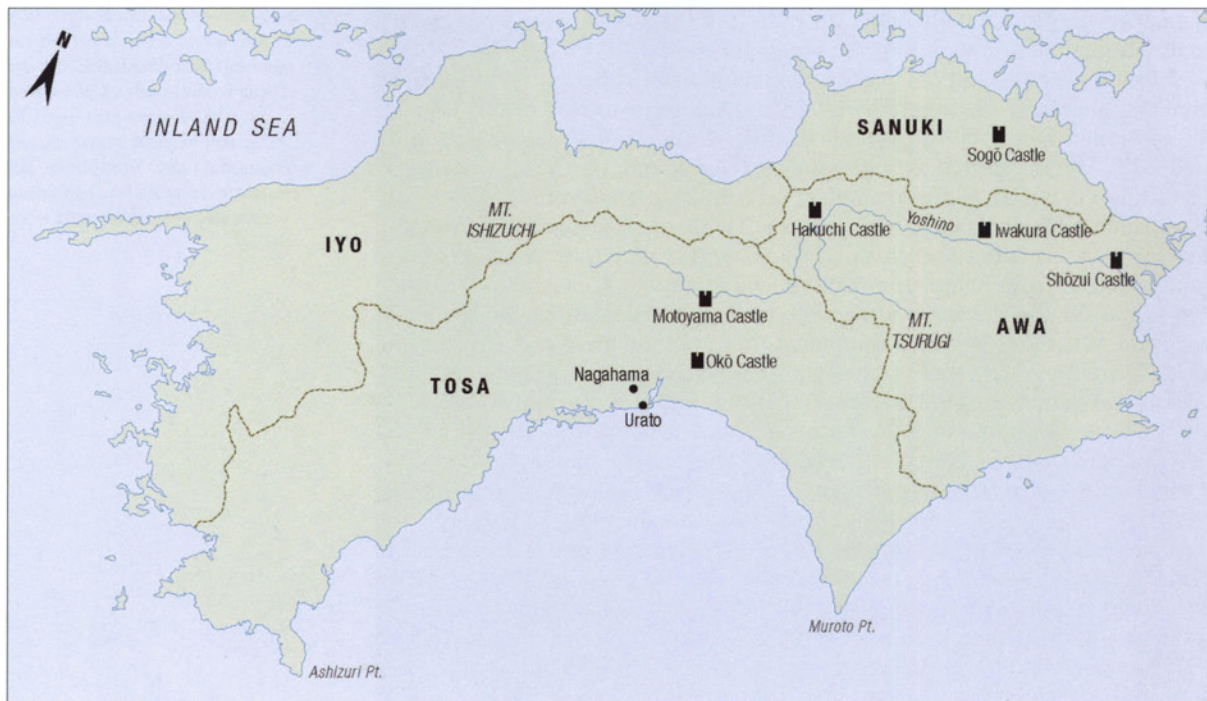
Okō castle, where Motochika was born, lay in Tosa province on the Pacific coast of Shikoku, close to modern Kochi. This meant that the Chōsokabe territories were at the far side of Shikoku from the main communications routes along the Inland Sea to the Kyōto area. Tosa was therefore something of a political backwater, but it allowed Motochika's programme of conquest to proceed without interference from anyone in the rest of Japan. His first battle was fought at the age of 21 on behalf of his father in a late revenge attack against the Motoyama, whose plotting had brought about the death of Motochika's grandfather and almost caused the ruin of the family. Following the death of his father and his succession to the position of daimyō Motochika pursued a series of military operations that had more to do with punishing the Motoyama than with any strategic aim involving the conquest of Shikoku. Yet once this initial goal had been attained in 1568 such a possibility could be considered. The defeat of the Motoyama gave Motochika their territories, so that the Chōsokabe now controlled northern and central Tosa. In a classic illustration of Sengoku *realpolitik*, the families in eastern Tosa were the next to suffer his aggression, followed by the Ichijō in western Tosa, who had once been his close allies.

By the summer of 1575 the 36-year-old Chōsokabe Motochika controlled the whole of Tosa province. The conquest of the rest of Shikoku could now be contemplated, but this was the age of Oda Nobunaga, news of whose military and political exploits had not failed to reach Tosa. In a shrewd political move, Motochika invited Nobunaga to become godfather to his eldest child at the boy's coming-of-age ceremony. The invitation was accepted, and Nobunaga bestowed upon the Chōsokabe heir the first character in his own name. He also indicated during the festivities that he would give Motochika a free hand to conquer Shikoku.

This diagram shows the *kashindan* (vassal band) of Chōsokabe Motochika. This very simple structure was created originally by his father Kunichika (1503–56) and proved sufficient for the conquest of Shikoku, even though it took 25 years. Apart from his family members, personal retainers and bodyguard, Motochika's fighting force relies entirely on the *ichiryō gusoku* ('one suit of armour'), which was all these part-time samurai-farmers owned when they fought as *yoriko* ('children') under their *yorioya* ('parents'). These brave warriors were quickly crushed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi's modern professional army in 1585.







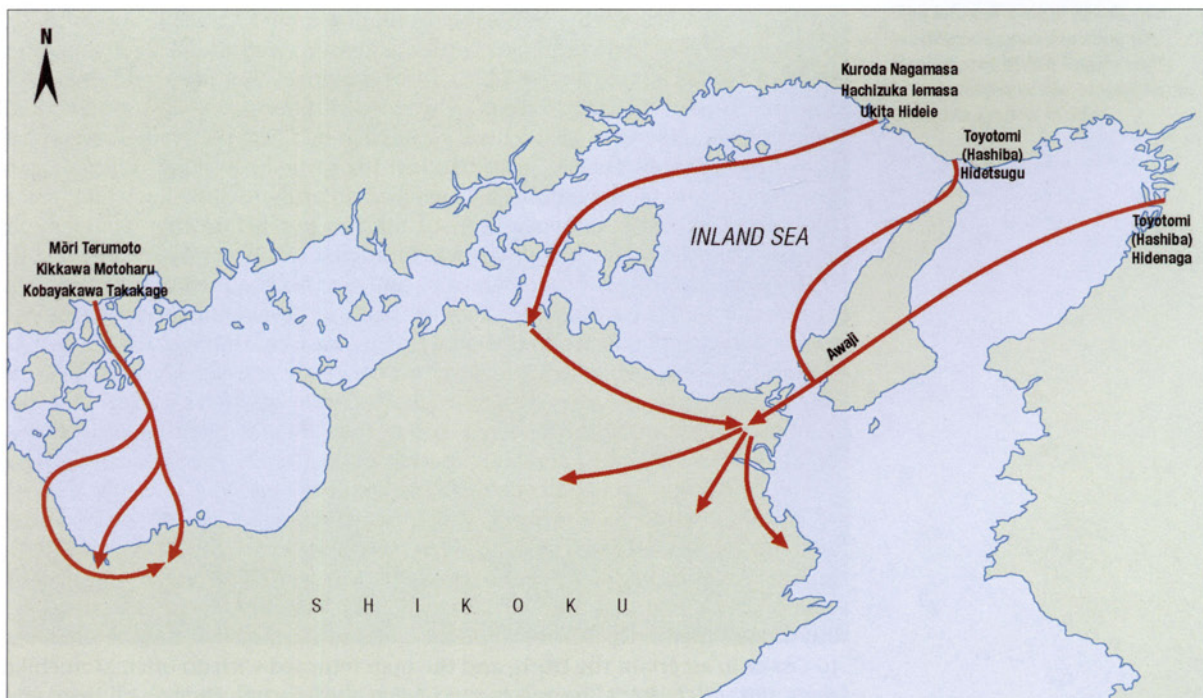
Chōsokabe Motochika's conquest of Shikoku, 1578, which began in Okō castle in Tosa province. It took 25 years to take in the whole of the island.

Thus reassured by the blessing of Japan's greatest daimyō Motochika made his strategic plans, and the first challenge he faced was one posed by geography. A mountain range, of which the two highest peaks are Tsurugi (1,954m) and Ishizuchi (1,982m), effectively divides Shikoku into separate northern and southern areas. In 1575 few people ventured outside their immediate neighbourhoods. Amazingly, Motochika was no exception, and this lack of experience beyond his own borders had resulted in a woeful ignorance



Chōsokabe Motochika, who took 25 years to conquer Shikoku with his part-time samurai farmers and then lost it in one month to the overwhelming force brought to bear against him by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1585.





about the lands he now intended to conquer. He knew where the mountain paths left Tosa and how wide they were, but he had little idea about where they actually led to. He knew that north of Tosa lay Shikoku's other three provinces of Awa, Sanuki and Iyo, each of which were defended by samurai armies as formidable as his own, but any knowledge of the means whereby he would tackle them were frighteningly vague.

Motochika did however suspect that somewhere on Shikoku there was a location where all the main roads from the four provinces converged. This was fortunately confirmed by an elderly Chōsokabe retainer, who just happened to have gone out of Tosa on pilgrimage in his youth. This revelation appears to be the limit of Motochika's initial intelligence gathering, but the information was crucial. The actual place lay on the Yoshino River and was defended by a castle called Hakuchi that was owned by Onishi Kakuyō, the uncle of Miyoshi Nagaharu, the daimyō of Awa. Motochika therefore decided to take on two of the three provinces as the first stage of conquest. An eastern army would invade Awa; a western army would invade Iyo, and a third army would be held back as a reserve. Hakuchi was the key.

Motochika began his campaign to capture Hakuchi by persuading Kakuyō to pledge allegiance to him in return for a promise that Kakuyō would be made daimyō of Awa. To cement the pledge Motochika received Kakuyō's son-in-law Kōnosuke as a hostage. In 1577 Miyoshi Nagataru was murdered by his own retainers in an operation in which the Chōsokabe must have been involved. Suspecting this, Kakuyō broke with Motochika and pledged allegiance to his uncle's successor. Expressing mock surprise and furious indignation, Motochika accused Kakuyō of having betrayed him and launched a surprise attack on Hakuchi. Kakuyō was stunned to find that Motochika was leading his army over the remote mountain paths from Tosa; but that had been another element in Motochika's plans, because his army had been willingly guided by Kakuyō's son-in-law, who had been living happily as a hostage in the Chōsokabe domain. As the army proceeded on its way Kōnosuke persuaded many old retainers of his family to join him, and when Hakuchi castle fell Kakuyō escaped disguised as a farmer.

Hideyoshi's invasion of Shikoku, 1585. The contrast between Chōsokabe's meagre efforts and Hideyoshi's application of overwhelming force is very noticeable.



With Hakuchi as a base Motochika's conquests spread rapidly, and by 1580, in a process that had combined battles, adoptions and military alliances, his kokka included adjacent areas of the three provinces. But his success had now reached the ears of Oda Nobunaga, who quickly reconsidered the free hand that he had allowed to Motochika. Nobunaga had also received a request for help from Miyoshi Shōgan, who had lost his castle of Iwakura. With Shōgan leading the vanguard, Nobunaga dispatched an army to Shikoku, which made its base in the Miyoshi possession of Shōzui, but before they could move against Motochika Oda Nobunaga was murdered and his army withdrew.

The stage looked set for Motochika to complete his conquest of the island, but once again he kept a sensible watch on political developments elsewhere, the most important of which was the rapid rise of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. If Motochika was going to succeed he would have to act decisively and quickly, so in 1584 he moved against Sōgō Masayasu and took Awa and Sanuki. That same year the Saionji of southern Iyo surrendered, and in the spring of 1585 the Kōno of Iyo, an ancient pirate family, also submitted to him. After 25 years of campaigning Chōsokabe Motochika had conquered the whole of Shikoku.

Poor Motochika had only one year in which to enjoy his triumph, because in 1585 he was faced by the considerable resources of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, whose invasion began by using psychological warfare. Rumours created by Hideyoshi's spies of an imminent incursion by a mighty army began to spread around the island. Chōsokabe Motochika was so alarmed that he sent a retainer to Osaka to ascertain the truth, and the man returned with an offer. Motochika must surrender all his conquests and pledge allegiance to Hideyoshi. He would then be re-invested with Tosa province.

The furious and proud Motochika refused to settle, so Hideyoshi's invasion force set sail. In place of Motochika's geographical ignorance Hideyoshi's expedition was launched to a background of intimate knowledge about available ports, castle strengths and likely sympathizers. Yet the factor that above all would carry the day was the application of overwhelming force. An army of 30,000 men under the command of Toyotomi Hidenaga, Hideyoshi's half-brother, and 60,000 men under Hidetsugu, Hideyoshi's nephew, rendezvoused on Awaji island and sailed to Awa province on 700 vessels. A further army of 23,000 men landed on the island of Yashima off Sanuki. Further west, an army of 60,000 men under Mōri invaded Iyo.

Chōsokabe Motochika set up his headquarters at Hakuchi castle. He commanded only 8,000 men in total, but it was not through numbers alone that Motochika's men felt overwhelmed, because the psychological warfare continued using the application of 'shock and awe'. The first of Motochika's retainers to be invited to surrender his castle reported to his master that the invading army wore armour 'encased with gold and silver'. Their horses were 'large and fierce-looking', and made the Tosa mounts look like ponies or even dogs. Tosa saddles were made of wood, and their 'ichiryō gusoku' wore armour that was hanging by threads. Their part-time samurai army was hopelessly outclassed by forces that were virtually professional soldiers. Once his other retainers also began to urge surrender Motochika's initial fury at their attitude turned to grudging acceptance. But just as Hideyoshi had promised, Motochika was allowed to keep only Tosa, while the other three provinces were given to Hideyoshi's retainers.

## **The false retreat and the Shimazu family**

Shikoku fell in 1585, and in 1586 Hideyoshi turned his attentions to Japan's great southern island of Kyūshū. The invasion of Kyūshū set the vast resources of the master of strategy against the stubborn tactics of the Shimazu of Satsuma, famous for their use of the technique of the false retreat, a stratagem which they operated on eight occasions between 1527 and 1600. Having the advantage of a loyal and cohesive army similar to that of the Hōjō, rather than a collection of loose allies, the Shimazu were able to operate a decoy system





The left and central panels of a woodblock print depicting the deployment of the Takeda and Uesugi forces at the second battle of Kawanakajima in 1555.

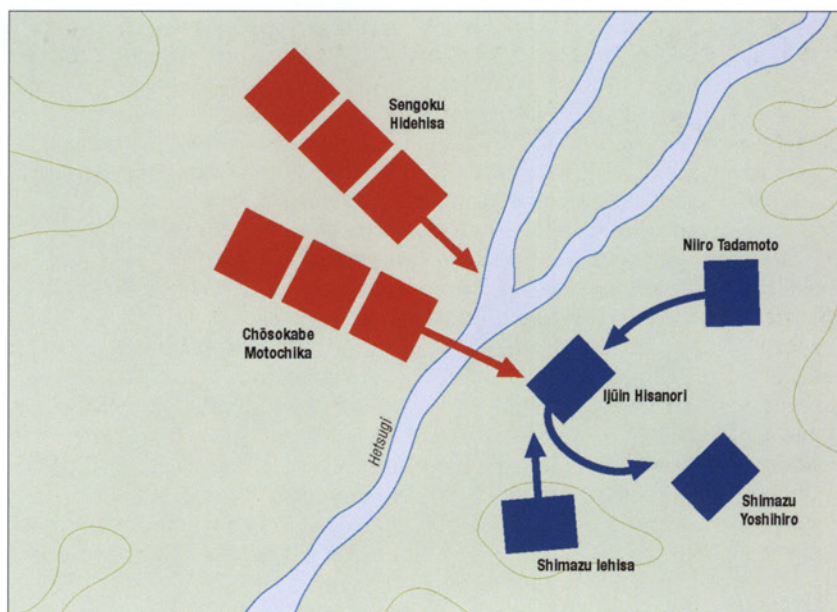
successfully. A decoy force acting as the vanguard would engage the enemy and then go into a false withdrawal. Other units of the Shimazu would be waiting concealed on the flanks, or could even mount a rear attack as the enemy were drawn into the trap. All but one occasion was successful, the failure being Sekigahara in 1600, where the Shimazu were but one army among others in a force doomed by the defection of an ally. Otherwise the system enabled the Shimazu to be victorious even against overwhelming odds at the battle of Kizakihara in 1573 against the Ito, and the battle of Okita-Nawate in 1584 against the Ryūzōji, where the ratio was ten to one in each case. At the battle of Mimigawa in 1578 the Shimazu allowed the Otomo troops to attack their centre, which held the impact of the assault, and then moved into a controlled withdrawal. The Shimazu withdrew back across the Takajogawa, leading the Otomo on. Then the troops concealed on the flank moved in, catching the Otomo on the same bank of the river. Shimazu Iehisa and Yamada Arinobu sallied down from Takajo castle to attack them in the rear. The result was a disaster for the Otomo. Three generals were killed, along with thousands of samurai and ashigaru whose bodies were strewn along the sea shore.

A further classic application of the system occurred during the initial stages of Hideyoshi's invasion of Kyūshū at the battle of Hetsugigawa in 1586. Hideyoshi's vanguard divisions under Chōsokabe Motochika and Sengoku Hidehisa landed on Kyūshū with orders to act defensively until further troops were able to join them. But the advance party decided to disobey Hideyoshi's commands and relieve the castle of Toshimitsu. The Shimazu besieging army noted their approach, and redoubled their efforts to take Toshimitsu, which subsequently fell to a rapid and ferocious attack, so that when the invaders arrived at the Hetsugigawa, which flowed within sight of the castle, they could see the flags of the Shimazu flying from its towers.

Chōsokabe Motochika proposed a withdrawal, but his companions insisted on doing battle, so the Shimazu set their trap. The decoy force was led by Ijuin Hisanori who led an attack across the river and then withdrew, which persuaded the allied left wing to follow them. They were met by arquebus and arrow fire, and the main body of the Shimazu then fell upon them. After much fierce fighting the invading force withdrew across the river and caused confusion to its own right wing. Chōsokabe Motochika was obliged to signal a



The false retreat at the battle of Hetsugigawa, 1586, a classic application of the favourite tactic of the Shimazu family.



full retreat, during which his son and heir Nobuchika, who had received his given name from Oda Nobunaga as part of the guarantee of non-interference in the Shikoku conquest, was killed.

As things turned out, the victory of Hetsugigawa did little to hinder the mighty advance by Toyotomi Hideyoshi into Kyūshū. Poised to destroy Kagoshima, Hideyoshi allowed the Shimazu to submit to him, and the Korean campaign of 1592 was to find them supplying troops for the invasion. At Sekigahara they fought on the losing side, where their application of a false retreat turned into a genuine one. Submissive again, this time to the Tokugawa, the Shimazu curried favour with the new Shogun when they invaded the kingdom of Ryūkyū (modern Okinawa) in 1609. Driven back from the harbour fortresses of Naha the Shimazu army withdrew and landed further north. From there they approached Shuri castle overland to find its landward side poorly defended. This was either a sensible response to a crisis, or the last false retreat that the Shimazu were ever to carry out.



A detail from the right-hand panel of the print shown on the previous page showing the scene within the maku where Takeda Shingen is located.



# Armies and battles of the Tokugawa shoguns

No armies in the whole of samurai history were ultimately more successful than those of the Tokugawa family. From the time of Tokugawa Nobutada (1489–1531), whose son and heir Kiyoyasu (1511–36) was murdered by one of his own vassals in a classic instance of early Sengoku turmoil, to the third Tokugawa Shogun Iemitsu (1603–51), who oversaw the closing of Japan to the outside world, the complete spectrum of samurai armies is illustrated as the Tokugawa army evolves from being a small daimyo's kashindan to what was in all but name the national army of Japan. In this section we will examine the creation of Ieyasu's kashindan, an organization he handed over intact to the second Shogun Hidetada, and see the part that the armies drawn from it played in his battles with Oda Nobunaga, Takeda Shingen, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Hojo Ujinao and Toyotomi Hideyori.

## Young Ieyasu

The Tokugawa family could trace its descent from the Minamoto, a connection that was to prove crucial when its most illustrious son restored the Shogunate in 1603. Yet at the time that Ieyasu was born in 1542 the family showed few traces of so great an ancestral pedigree. Even the original surname had disappeared in favour of Matsudaira, and on the death of Kiyoyasu in 1536 the entire family might well have followed the word Tokugawa to extinction had not his heir Hirotada (1526–49) been taken into the protection of a loyal follower. Hirotada survived and prospered under the overall control of the powerful Imagawa family, in whose kashindan the Matsudaira found themselves. Hirotada was eventually allowed to settle at Okazaki in his family's ancestral lands in Mikawa province. Here he became a father at the age of 17, his wife giving birth to the future Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu.

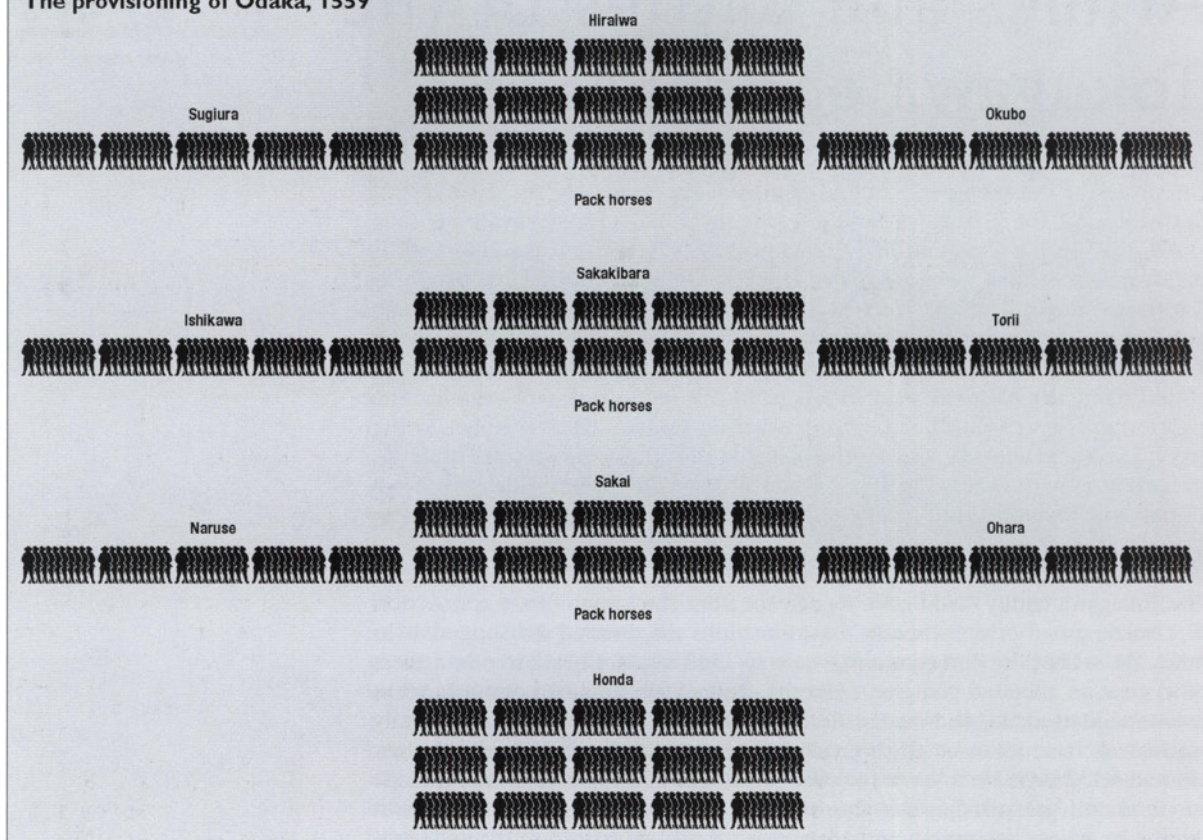
Tokugawa Hirotada spent much of his short life (he died at 24) fighting against Oda Nobuhide, Nobunaga's father, on behalf of the Imagawa. The first battle of Azukizaka in 1542, fought just before Ieyasu was born, was one such fierce encounter. Young Ieyasu's unfortunate role in the long conflict was to be

A woodblock print depicting the kashindan (retainer band) of Tokugawa Ieyasu. These men and their descendants were to become the fudai daimyo of the Tokugawa state.





## The provisioning of Odaka, 1559



To be placed in charge of the supply column was not a role favoured by a brave samurai, but Tokugawa Ieyasu earned great renown when he led a supply column into Odaka castle under the noses of Oda Nobunaga's troops, who dared not leave their own castles when under pressure from a feint attack. This diagram shows how Ieyasu sheltered the pack horse batteries within a defensive screen of mounted samurai.

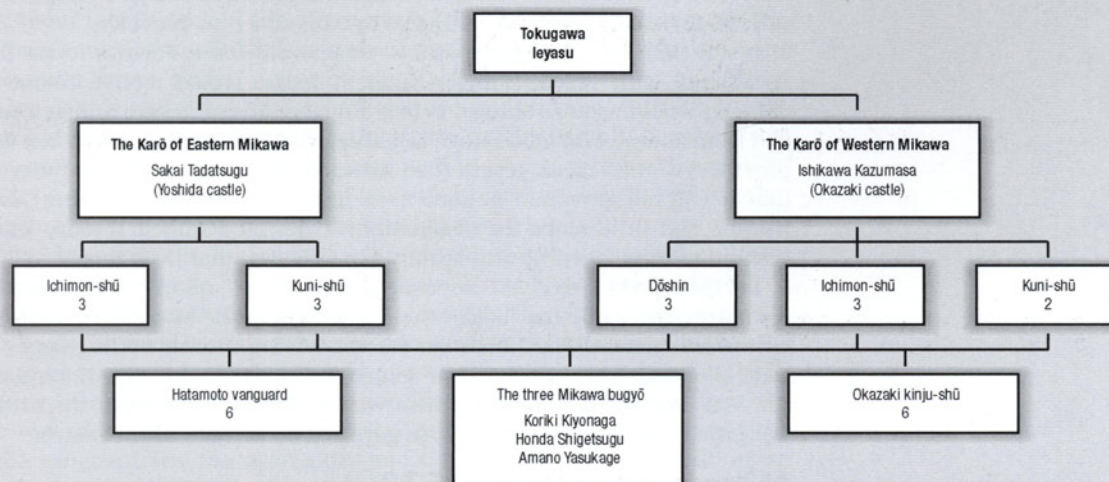
a hostage for good behaviour. Part of this time was spent in the custody of his family's enemies the Oda after being kidnapped, and some of it living in the elegant and friendly court of Imagawa Yoshimoto. When he grew to manhood Ieyasu continued the family tradition of loyal service to the Imagawa and fought his first battle in 1558. This was the capture of the castle of Terabe, which had been surrendered to Oda Nobunaga. It lay in western Mikawa,

The maku of Tokugawa Ieyasu at the battle of Anegawa in 1570. His white flag of the Jōdo sect of Buddhism is shown here in two pieces. Note also his golden fan standard. The fierce hand-to-hand fighting of the battle appears to be taking place a little too close for comfort.





## The kashindan of Tokugawa Ieyasu, 1565



Ieyasu's traditional territory, so it gave him great pleasure to accomplish the task successfully.

In 1559 Ieyasu again demonstrated his military skills by shepherding a pack-horse column into Odaka castle under the noses of Oda Nobunaga's army. Odaka was the only one of five disputed frontier forts not in Nobunaga's hands, and it desperately needed supplies. Ieyasu launched diversionary attacks against two of the other forts, at which the garrisons of the remaining two came out to their assistance. Ieyasu's supply column was waiting in readiness, and as soon as the two nearest forts were denuded of troops Ieyasu calmly marched into Odaka.

Ieyasu's success on the frontier was one factor in persuading Imagawa Yoshimoto to make a decisive move against Kyōto. Oda Nobunaga's territories lay directly in his path, and the task of reducing the fort of Marune fell to Tokugawa Ieyasu. First he made a sharp attack, whereupon the defenders opened the gate and sallied out to find Ieyasu waiting for them with a volley of arrows and bullets, one of which killed the defending commander. When the neighbouring fort of Washizu also fell Imagawa Yoshimoto took the opportunity to rest his army. There he was caught by Nobunaga at the battle of Okehazama, which deprived Yoshimoto of his head and put the Imagawa fortunes swiftly into reverse. Ieyasu was fortunately nowhere near the scene of the disaster, and the debacle eventually freed him from his obligations to the Imagawa. It was not long before he received an offer of alliance from Oda Nobunaga. The proposal went against the grain for several of the older karō, because the Oda had been their enemies for years, but Ieyasu had always been an astute reader of the political scene, and began an alliance that was to last successfully until the death of Nobunaga 22 years later. Imagawa Yoshimoto's heir Ujizane (d.1614) was abandoned to his fate.

Between 1563 and 1564 Ieyasu overcame the Ikko-ikki armies of the Buddhist Jōdō Shinshū sect in his native province of Mikawa by using a curious combination of political cunning and reckless samurai abandon. The cunning came with a peace agreement whereby the temples of the Ikko-ikki were returned to their natural state, which Ieyasu interpreted as meaning green fields with no buildings left standing. The recklessness came with the free hand Ieyasu gave himself during the second battle of Azukizaka in 1563. On returning home he stripped off his armour and two spent bullets fell out of his shirt. By now almost all of Mikawa province was his. The final districts passed

During 1565 Tokugawa Ieyasu completed his acquisition of Mikawa province from his erstwhile overlords the Imagawa. He divided its administration into two parts: east and west, under his karō Sakai Tadatsugu at Yoshida and Ishikawa Kazumasa at Okazaki. Each commanded various groups of retainers, and had overall responsibility for the three Mikawa bugyō who carried out the day-to-day administration.



to him after an unsuccessful attack on Ujizane's Yoshida castle but its successful surrender by negotiation. Sakai Tadatsugu was placed in charge of Yoshida, and in 1565 Ieyasu appointed three bugyō to administer his province.

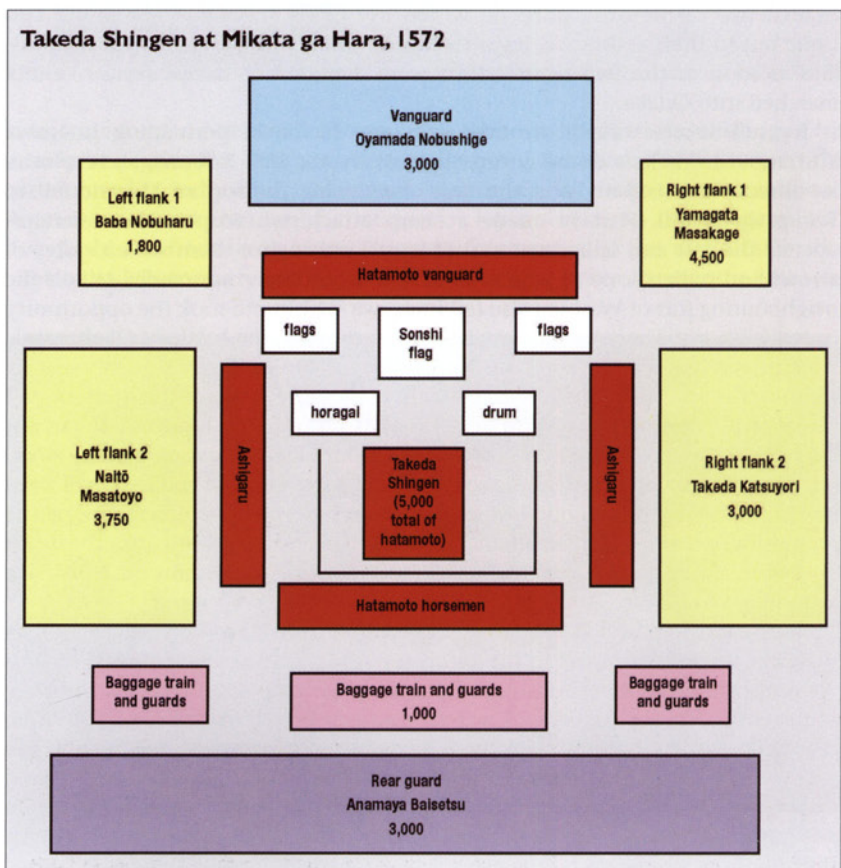
It was time for a final push against Imagawa Ujizane. For this Ieyasu made an alliance with Takeda Shingen whereby Ieyasu would receive Tōtōmi and Shingen would acquire Suruga. When Shingen advanced into Suruga Ujizane fled from Sumpu and took refuge in Kakegawa, thereby abandoning one of his provinces to the Takeda. Ieyasu then besieged him in Kakegawa, and suggested that if Ujizane gave him Tōtōmi he would assist him in regaining Suruga. Ujizane had little scope for negotiation, so Ieyasu acquired Tōtōmi, and his kashindan grew when he also acquired the samurai that lived there.

In 1569 Ieyasu received imperial permission to resume the surname of Tokugawa, the name that linked the Matsudaira to the Minamoto. In 1570 he moved his capital to Hamamatsu in Tōtōmi, leaving Okazaki in the charge of his son Nobuyasu. That same year he joined Nobunaga for an expedition against the Asai and Asakura families which was eventually to result in the battle of Anegawa. Here the Tokugawa troops gave a good account of themselves.

## Mikata ga Hara, 1572

In 1572 Ieyasu received his most serious military challenge at the important battle of Mikata ga Hara, which came about as a result of a major drive south by Takeda Shingen against Hamamatsu castle. Rather than stay inside Hamamatsu and suffer a siege, Ieyasu advanced to meet them in pitched battle on the high ground to the north. The *Kōyō Gunkan* gives Shingen's formation as gyōrin, arranged as in the diagram on page 76. Ieyasu was heavily outnumbered by about three to one in a total army of 11,000, of which 8,000

When Takeda Shingen presented Ieyasu with his toughest challenge at the battle of Mikata ga Hara in 1572 he is said to have arranged his army in the gyōrin formation. The fish-scales shape was provided by the flanking units of Yamagata, Naitō, Baba and Shingen's son and heir Takeda Katsuyori behind the vanguard of Oyamada. Takeda Shingen's hatamoto form the main body beneath his flag that bore a quotation from the Chinese military strategist Sun Zi.

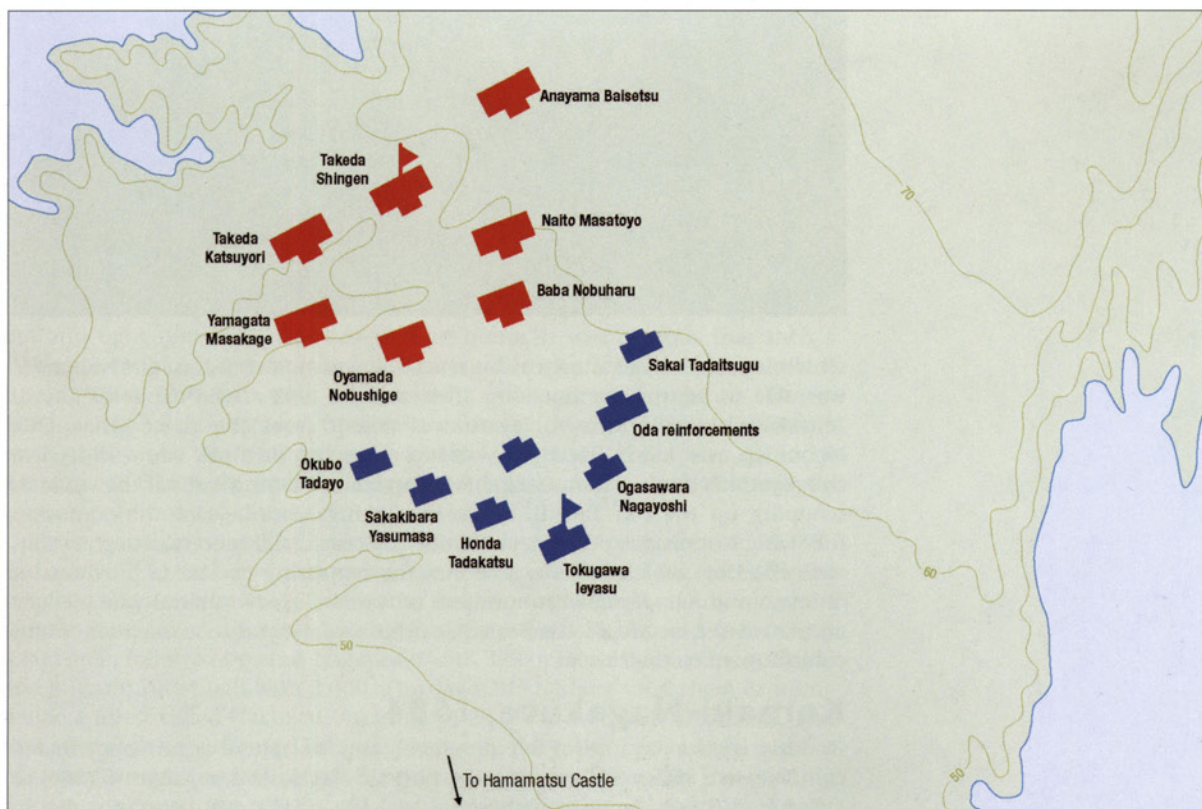


were his own troops and 3,000 were reinforcements from Nobunaga. These he drew up in a kakuyoku formation.

At about four o'clock in the afternoon, as the snow was beginning to fall, the front ranks of the Tokugawa opened fire, apparently by first throwing stones, and when bullets followed the Takeda responded. At this point Shingen calmly withdrew his forward units to rest and sent in fresh troops. Saigusa Moritomo led 50 horsemen in a fierce cavalry assault. It was getting dark, and seeing the Tokugawa troops reeling Shingen ordered a general assault by the main body. Very soon the Tokugawa army was in full retreat.

Having planted his golden fan standard as a rallying point Ieyasu was for charging back into the Takeda ranks, but Natsume Yoshinobu rode out from the fortress to persuade his lord to withdraw. Three more samurai sacrificed themselves for Ieyasu during the desperate retreat. The rapid arrival of Ieyasu at Hamamatsu made it appear that defeat was certain, but Ieyasu ordered the gates to be left open for their retreating comrades, and huge braziers to be lit to guide them home. To add to the confident air Sakai Tadatsugu beat the large war drum in the tower beside the gate. As Ieyasu had predicted the Takeda vanguard saw the open gates and the light and heard the drum, so there was no immediate attack. To add to the false impression of strength Ieyasu ordered a night attack on the Takeda lines, and Shingen withdrew the following morning, leaving Hamamatsu safe. Mikata ga Hara may therefore be regarded as Ieyasu's most successful defeat, but it also marks the moment when he stopped taking risks.

Ieyasu's luck changed the following year when Takeda Shingen died, so it was his heir Katsuyori who was defeated at the famous battle of Nagashino in which Ieyasu participated. It took a further seven years to finish off the Takeda, for



The Battle of Mikata ga Hara, 1572, fought on high ground to the north of Hamamatsu castle.



Sakai Tadatsugu beats the drum in the gate tower of Hamamatsu castle to guide home the defeated Tokugawa troops after the battle of Mikata ga Hara in 1572.



which Ieyasu received Suruga as his reward. It was almost the last gift Nobunaga was able to bestow, for not long afterwards he died at the hands of Akechi Mitsuhide. Like Hideyoshi, Ieyasu was absent from the scene when Oda Nobunaga was killed. He then watched from the sidelines while Hideyoshi destroyed his rivals at Yamazaki and Shizugatake, busying himself the while in scooping up the old Takeda territories. Taking advantage of the confusion following Nobunaga's death, Ieyasu undertook rapid and successful negotiations with the Hōjō which were to give him the remaining ex-Takeda provinces of Shinano and Kai, along with hundreds of former Takeda samurai who pledged allegiance to him. He also dedicated a shrine to Katsuyori to assure them of his commitment to their welfare.

### **Komaki-Nagakute, 1584**

By 1584 Ieyasu was lord of five provinces, and his sphere of influence finally collided with Hideyoshi's during the Komaki-Nagakute campaign of 1584, so called from the two engagements that took place. The campaign provides an excellent example of thoughtful strategy followed by furious battling, and an occasion when the divisions into which an army was split had great bearing on



the outcome of a battle. We see armies spread out so much that rear guards are assaulted by vanguards who are then surprised themselves in spite of the vigilance of scouts.

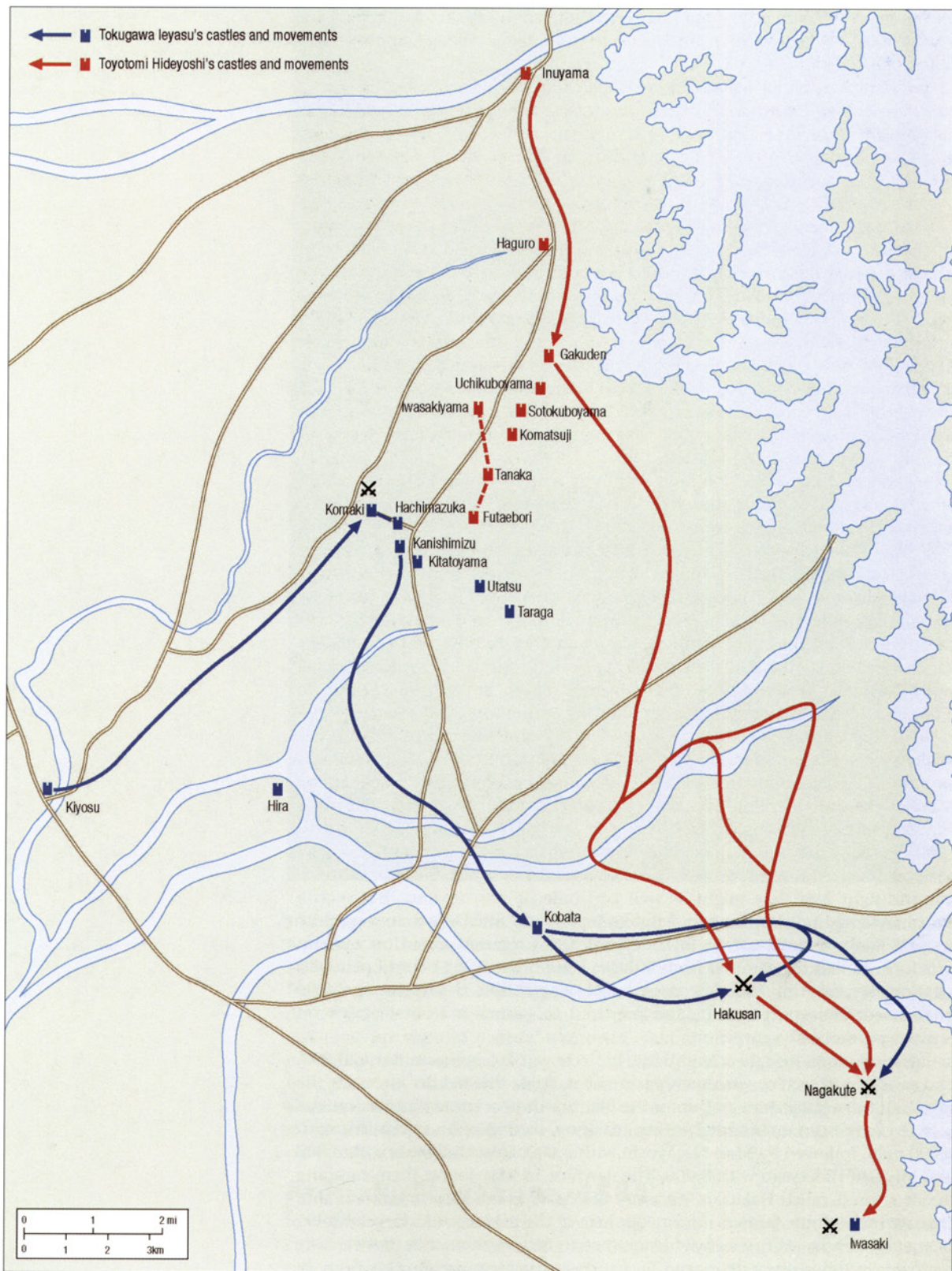
The campaign began when Hideyoshi's ally Ikeda Tsuneoki (also known as Nobuteru) took the castle of Inuyama, on the Kiso River. Ieyasu had established his forward base at Nobunaga's former castle of Kiyosu. The capture of Inuyama was thus an indirect move against Ieyasu, and when Ikeda's son-in-law Mori Nagayoshi was seen to be moving along the road from Inuyama towards Kiyosu, Ieyasu decided to stop the advance while the force was still isolated. Sakai Tadatsugu and others took a detachment of the Tokugawa force, 5,000 strong, and met the Mori army halfway along the road at Komaki. Here a fierce battle ensued. Mori managed to hold the Tokugawa force in the village in spite of heavy arquebus fire, until Sakai circled round and attacked him from the rear. Mori hastily retreated, with the loss of 300 men. Sakakibara Yasumasa then suggested that Ieyasu should move his headquarters up to Komaki, for near the village was a ruined castle on a rounded hill 200m high that dominated the flat rice lands. So the Tokugawa force dug trenches and erected palisades around Komakiyama. The building of fortifications took a week, and, as no immediate danger threatened, Ieyasu ordered the repair of two old castles at Hira and Kobata.

We are also told that Ieyasu built a military road to connect Komaki with a series of forts out to the southeast. This was almost certainly fortified, at least as far as Hachimanzuka, a conclusion drawn from Hideyoshi's response to it. On 7 May 1584, Hideyoshi had entered Inuyama castle, where he was apprized of developments by Ikeda Nobuteru. A reconnaissance of Ieyasu's position at Komaki showed that both of Hideyoshi's own two front-line forts of Iwasakiyama and Futaebori were on ground lower than Komaki. Hideyoshi therefore ordered the construction of a long rampart to join the two together via the fort of Tanaka. The resulting earthwork, probably strengthened with wood, was completed overnight. It was over 2km long, 3m high and 2m thick, and was pierced with several gates to allow a counter attack. The slope of the rampart also allowed for the provision of firing positions. Satisfied with his defensive front line, Hideyoshi set up his headquarters to the rear at Gakuden, which was linked to Tanaka by a series of communications forts.

From behind their lines both commanders waited, fearing to launch a frontal attack and meet the fate of Takeda Katsuyori at Nagashino. Hideyoshi had no fewer than 80,000 men under his command, and was rather bored by the situation, because he wrote to a colleague that as Ieyasu would not come out and fight him they might as well go home. It was obvious that such a stalemate could not last long in Sengoku Japan, and after less than a week of waiting Ikeda Nobuteru went to Hideyoshi and suggested a raid on Mikawa province. As half the samurai from Mikawa were now sitting behind palisades on Komakiyama this sounded a reasonable suggestion if surprise could be guaranteed. Hideyoshi agreed, and prepared to launch a frontal attack on Ieyasu's positions as a diversion.

Ikeda set off on his raid at midnight, 15/16 May. His force numbered 20,000, and as an aid to secrecy with such a large host, Ikeda divided his forces for the march. It was a risky strategy, but for the first two days at least communications seem to have been maintained within his army. Ikeda Nobuteru left first with 6,000 men, followed by Mori Nagayoshi with 3,000, Hori Hidemasa with 3,000 and Miyoshi Hidetsugu with 8,000. The dawn of 16 May found them camping beside a forest called Hakuzan. An army of 20,000 is not easy to conceal, and that afternoon some farmers informed Ieyasu of the presence of a large number of enemy samurai. At first he was disinclined to believe them, but that evening a scout confirmed the report, and Ieyasu prepared to move. By this time, of course, Ikeda's army had moved on, more slowly now, marching through the day after a short rest. On the night of 16/17 May the raiding army was heading







for Iwasaki, a fort held for Ieyasu by Niwa Ujishige. The army was now spread over about 8km, and at dawn on 17 May Ikeda's vanguard assaulted Iwasaki, which they took with little trouble.

Ikeda's success, however, had been achieved only by his vanguard. The rest of the army were still nowhere in sight, and were in fact eating their breakfast at Hakuzan, oblivious of the victory and also ignorant of the fact that the Tokugawa army was in pursuit of them. Ieyasu had in fact left his lines at 20.00hrs the evening of 16 May. His advance guard under Mizuno Tadashige had reached Kobata about 22.00hrs, where they were joined by Ieyasu at midnight. Ieyasu had correctly guessed Ikeda's strategy and had also worked out that his army would be strung out along the road and therefore very vulnerable.

Ieyasu's general Mizuno Tadashige was allowed a two-hour sleep and was then sent to catch the rear guard of Ikeda's army. The surprise was complete. The Ikeda rear guard under Miyoshi Hidetsugu was suddenly attacked by Mizuno Tadashige from the right and Sakakibara Yasubara from the left. The attack was completely successful, and Miyoshi only just managed to escape with his head. His third division, who were the nearest source of help, lay about 4km farther along the road, but the sound of arquebus fire reached them before the mounted Courier Guards. Realizing that something serious was happening Hori Hidemasa quickly wheeled his army round and marched back towards the sound of firing. They soon reached the village of Nagakute, and seeing that the Tokugawa troops were still advancing, he took up positions in two companies on a hill, with a small river between them and the advancing enemy.

It was 07.00hrs on the morning of 17 May. Hori ordered his men to light their matches, and load ready to fire when the enemy were about 15m away. As an added inducement he offered 100 koku of rice to anyone who brought down a horseman. On came the Tokugawa troops at a run, straight into the range of the arquebuses. A hail of bullets swept their ranks, and seeing them reel Hori led his men in a vigorous charge which flung the Tokugawa samurai aside. But as Hori's 3,000 hit the Tokugawa 4,500 and split them wide open, Hori saw on the horizon the golden fan standard of Ieyasu leading the Tokugawa main body. Once again the surpriser had been surprised. Hori prudently withdrew, and again took up his position together with the first and second divisions under Mori and Ikeda, who had hurried back from Iwasaki to join him. Tokugawa Ieyasu made a wide sweep as he arrived, collecting up the remnants of his vanguard.

There was a pause while both armies dressed their ranks, and then at 09.00hrs the second phase of the battle of Nagakute began with the Tokugawa arquebusiers blazing away at their opponents. This goaded the two Ikeda sons into attacking Ii Naomasa, who held them off with fierce arquebus fire. Ikeda senior moved over to aid his sons, but neither Mori nor Ieyasu had yet fired a shot. Mori was waiting for Ieyasu to support his left wing, whereupon Mori could take him in flank, but Ieyasu was not fooled. He suddenly charged his whole contingent forward in two sections, and the impact alone made Mori's samurai stagger. Mori rode up and down in front of his lines and waved his war fan frantically. He stood out conspicuously in his white surcoat, and one of the Ii ashigaru took careful aim and shot him through the head. It was a very public death, and acted as a signal for Oda Nobuo to swoop round and fall on Mori's flank. In vain did Ikeda Tsuneoki send his men forward in support. The whole Mori force gave way, and Ikeda Tsuneoki collapsed on his camp stool knowing that all was lost. A young samurai ran up and speared him through, acquiring a prize head. By 13.00hrs the battle was over. Ieyasu sat down and was shown 2,500 heads of the defeated. He was pleased to hear that their own losses had been fewer than 600.

Meanwhile, back at the two bases, speculation was growing about the outcome of the expedition. When Hideyoshi heard of the early morning encounter he immediately set off with reinforcements, while Honda Tadakatsu



In this detail from a painted screen of the battle of Nagakute we see the death of Ikeda Tsuneoki. His body, having already lost its head, topples forward off the general's camp stool on which he has been sitting to reveal on his back the framework for a horo.



Tokugawa Ieyasu's hataimoto at the battle of Nagashino included his tsukai-ban (Courier Guard), a helmet bearer, and his standard bearer carrying the giant golden fan o uma jirushi. Also shown here is a samurai wearing a sashimono with a gold disc on white. He is probably a member of Ieyasu's personal bodyguard, the men that were to become his Oban (Great Guard), founded in 1592.



made ready to take him in flank. In fact, it never came to a battle, for Hideyoshi's force was so vast as to make him extremely sympathetic to Honda's bravery, and although they could have annihilated the talented Tokugawa captain they did not even threaten him. Honda therefore carried on to Kobata, where he met Ieyasu. Soon both armies were safe behind their lines, and the previous stalemate began again. In fact no frontal attack between the two ever took place at Komaki, and the ramparts were eventually allowed to crumble back into the rice fields.

The Komaki-Nagakute campaign is one that reflects well on both commanders. Both sensibly used their experience of Nagashino to erect field fortifications, but

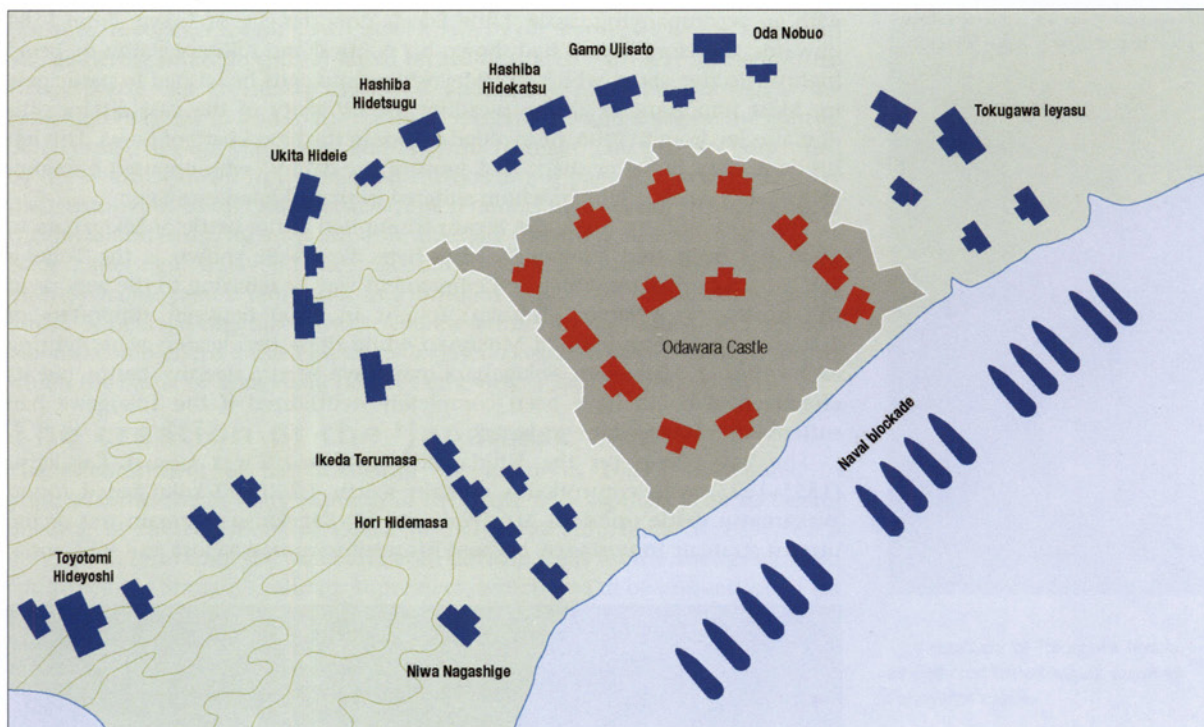
then the samurai spirit asserted itself by the decision to relieve boredom by fighting a battle somewhere else. The manoeuvres prior to the battle of Nagakute are fascinating, and depended totally on the fact that an advancing column occupied a great deal of space. Yet each reacted coolly to often baffling intelligence reports.

The subsequent stand-off lasted for several months, but from the end of 1584 the relations between Ieyasu and Hideyoshi changed from military campaigning to politics. Each came to see that the other was worth more with a head than without one, so Ieyasu submitted. Hideyoshi, he reasoned, could not last forever, and between them they could conquer the rest of Japan.

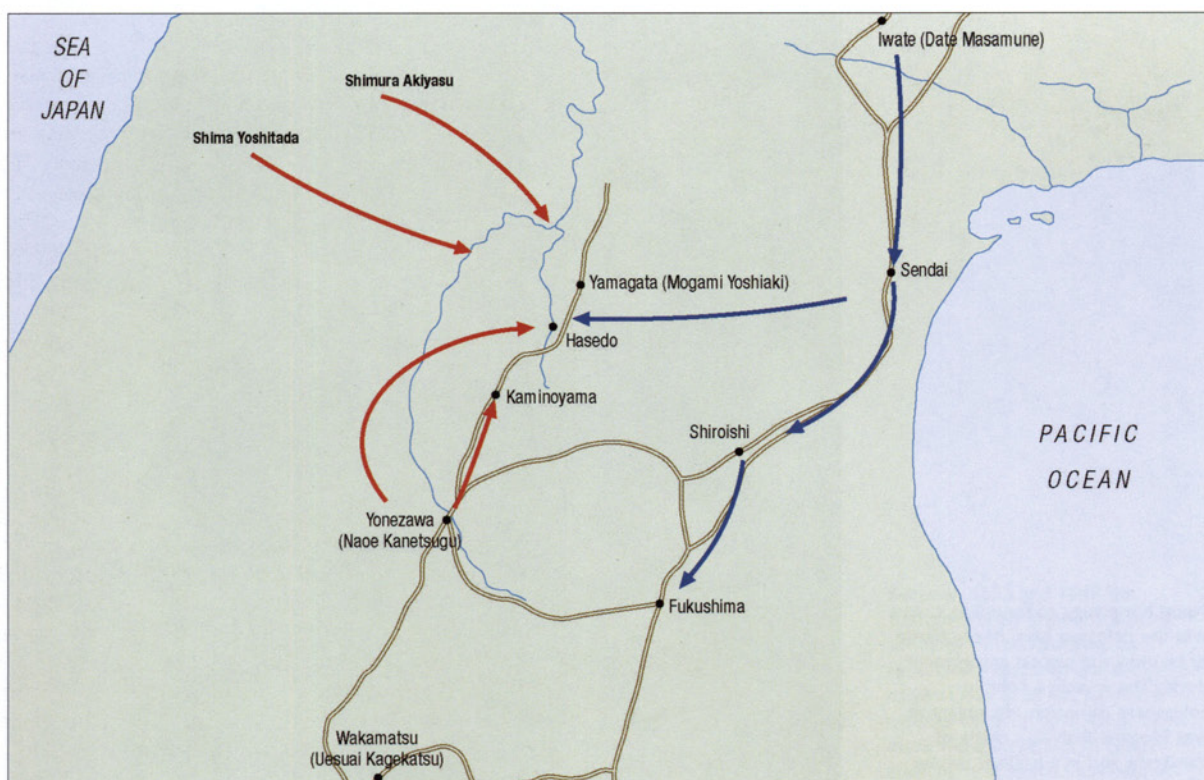
## From Odawara to Osaka

Tokugawa Ieyasu's next major expedition on Hideyoshi's behalf involved him in little effort but gained him an immense reward. Having avoided service in the invasions of Shikoku and Kyūshū Ieyasu could hardly refuse to be involved in the siege of the Hōjō's Odawara castle in 1590. The Tokugawa troops were among the few to see real action at Odawara, and when the Hōjō capitulated Hideyoshi struck a deal with Ieyasu whereby he would surrender his existing provinces in return for the Hōjō's former domains. Ieyasu agreed, and took over the eight provinces of the Kantō, although he did not make Odawara his capital. Instead he established it at Edo, a modestly sized fishing village





The siege of Odawara, 1590. The Hōjō were completely surrounded by land and by sea.



A simplified map of the Tōhoku Sekigahara campaign, 1600, which could have thrown Ieyasu's achievements at Sekigahara into reverse.



with an accompanying castle. Little Edo is now the city of Tokyo. From 1584 onwards, therefore, Ieyasu had shown his political and military genius by being highly selective about which of Hideyoshi's campaigns he wished to participate in. Most important of all, by pleading the difficulty of the vast distance his domains lay from Kyūshū, he avoided service in the blood-bath of Korea. This left his own army in better shape than most of the daimyō who opposed him after Hideyoshi's death, many of whom suffered in that ill-fated campaign.

The story of how Tokugawa Ieyasu triumphed at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600 has been told adequately elsewhere. Less well known is the Tohoku Sekigahara campaign, which is a convenient way of referring to the actions in the northeast of Japan (Tohoku) fought in 1600 between supporters of Tokugawa Ieyasu and Ishida Mitsunari while these two leaders were fighting each other at Sekigahara. Sekigahara may have been a decisive battle, but its effectiveness could have been completely neutralized if the Tokugawa had suffered defeat elsewhere in Japan.

The key player on the Ishida side in Tohoku was Uesugi Kagekatsu (1555–1623) who controlled a domain worth 1,200,000 koku based round Wakamatsu castle (modern Aizu-Wakamatsu). Kagekatsu's domain was of the utmost strategic importance, because his territory posed a close and substantial



Naoe Kanetsugu of Yonezawa castle was the defeated hero of the battle of Hasedo, the pivotal engagement during the so-called Tohoku Sekigahara campaign. His objective was Mogami Yoshiaki's castle of Yamagata, and in a brilliant display of coordination of forces, Kanetsugu organized three separate armies to move against it.



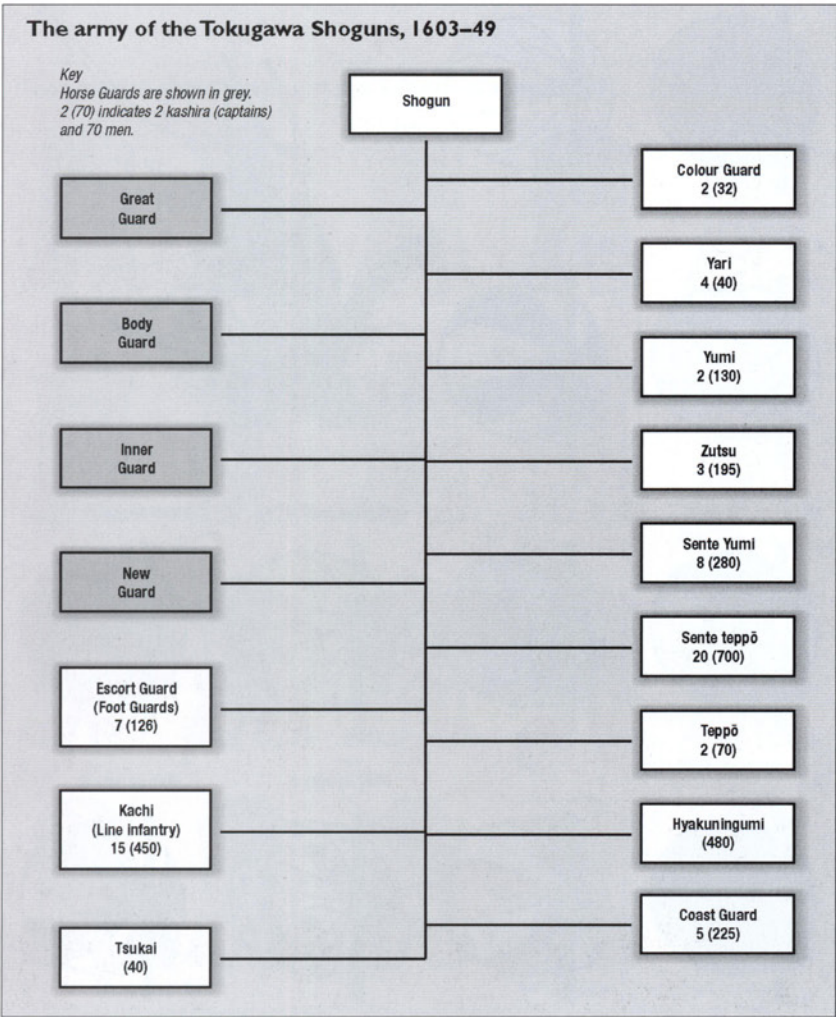
threat to Tokugawa Ieyasu's own power base in the Kantō. As Ishida Mitsunari was gathering forces in central Japan Ieyasu was faced with war on two fronts. His response was to march southwest and tackle Mitsunari himself – the campaign that was to lead to the battle of Sekigahara – and delegate the control of Kagekatsu to Date Masamune and Mogami Yoshiaki. The territory controlled by the rivals is shown in the map on the bottom of page 83. To the south lay the territories of Uesugi Kagekatsu, whose retainers held several strongpoints to the north and east. The most important among these was Yonezawa, owned by Naoe Kanetsugu. It lay on the road directly north from Wakamatsu about midway to Mogami's Yamagata. In a brilliant display of coordination of his forces, Kanetsugu organized three separate armies to move against Yamagata but also commenced a wasteful siege of Hasedo castle. It lasted 15 days, during which the battle of Sekigahara negated any victory he might have gained.

## The creation of the 'Japanese Army'

The establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603 consolidated in political terms the military triumph of the battle of Sekigahara. The successful quelling of the rebellions at Osaka in 1614 and Shimabara in 1638, each different in form from the other and both difficult tasks for the Tokugawa, then confirmed the Shogun's military supremacy, which was to be unquestioned for the next two centuries.



The retainers of Tokugawa Ieyasu, as depicted on a hanging scroll in Fukuyama castle.



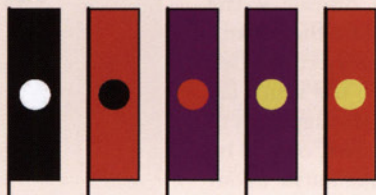
Between 1603 and 1649 the Tokugawa army grew from being the army of the man who had successfully restored the Shogunate to what was in all but name the national army of Japan. Until 1643 there were three Horse Guard units, each of which increased in size over the years. The Foot Guards, line troops and specialized units made up the rest of the army.



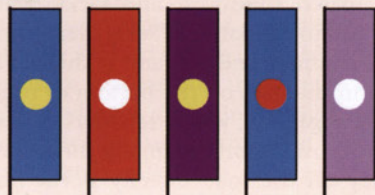
## The Great Guard of the Tokugawa



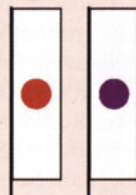
1592



1615



1632

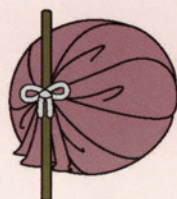


In common with all other daimyō Tokugawa Ieyasu had his own Horse Guards. The Oban (Great Guard) was created by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1592 and originally consisted of five kumi. Its members wore a flag sashimono with a coloured disc. Each kumi had one kashira (captain) four kumigashira (lieutenants) and 50 guardsmen. Every kashira had 30 kinju, while other guardsmen supplied their own followers according to the income schedule.

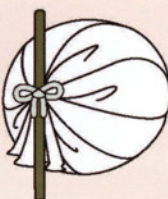
Tokugawa Ieyasu retired from the position of Shogun in 1605 in favour of his son Hidetada (1579–1632), and although his father allowed him the honour of commanding the Tokugawa army at Osaka, it is clear from all the accounts that Hidetada's role was subordinate to that of Ieyasu, who had little confidence in him after his disappointing performance in the Sekigahara campaign. Hidetada had been ordered to hurry towards Kyōto along the Nakasendō road. On the way he commenced a siege of Ueda castle in defiance

## The Bodyguard of the Tokugawa army, 1649

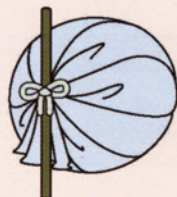
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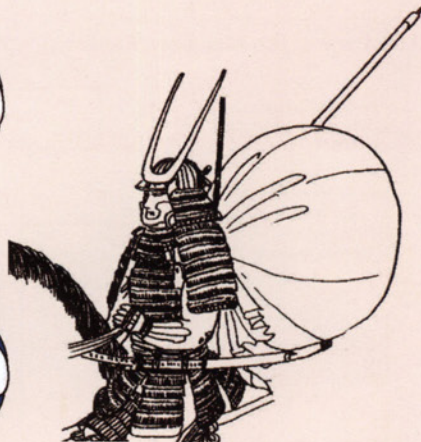
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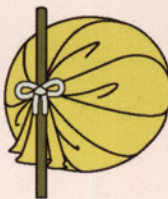
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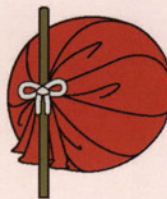
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Nishi no maru 1



Nishi no maru 3



4



8



Nishi no maru 2

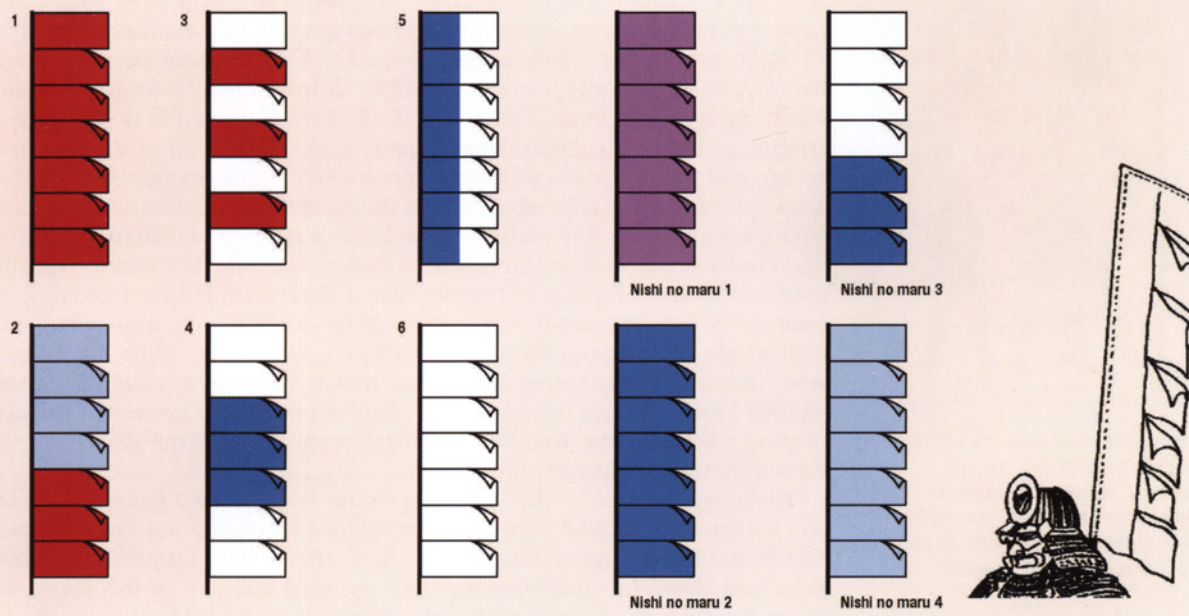


Nishi no maru 4

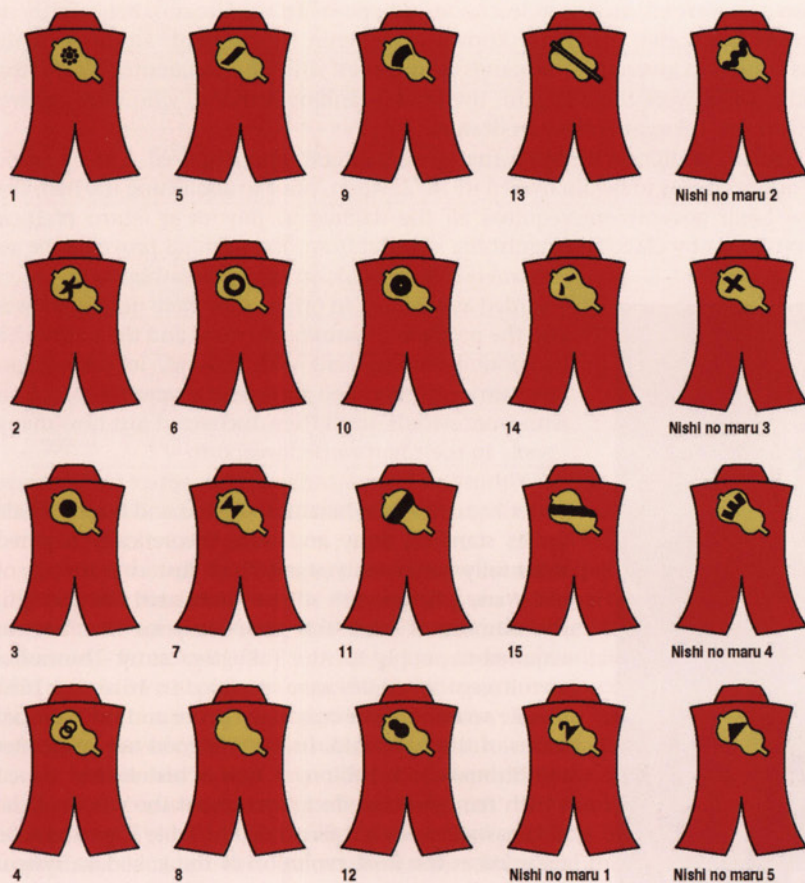


The Shoinban (Body Guard) had responsibility for defending the person of the Shogun. The members of its kumi wore different coloured horo. Each kumi had one kashira, one kumigashira and 50 guardsmen, all of whom supplied their own kinju. Nishi no maru (Western Bailey) refers to Edo castle and indicates the guard units responsible for the Shogun's heir.

### The Inner Guard of the Tokugawa army, 1649



### The Line Infantry Captains of the Tokugawa army, 1649



The Inner Guard of the Tokugawa Army, 1649. The Koshōban (Inner Guard) were in charge of the defence of Edo castle. There were six kumi who wore flag sashimono with slashed edges. Its numbers were the same as for the Body Guard.

The Line Infantry Captains of the Tokugawa army, 1649. The okachi kashira commanded the 'line infantry' regiments of samurai in the Tokugawa army, whose members were called the yoriki. Their officers wore scarlet jinbaori (surcoats) ornamented with a particular gold fan design to show which company they commanded.





In the Tokugawa army the okachi kashira commanded the 'line infantry' regiments of samurai, whose members were the yoriki. The dôshin filled the ranks of the specialized ashigaru squads.

A member of a Japanese re-enactment group poses to show the perfect detail of his helmet ornamented with deer antlers and tied securely round his face using an authentic pattern of helmet cords.



of his father's commands, and thus arrived too late to take part in the battle of Sekigahara, a failure that could have cost them dear. Ieyasu never forgot this lapse, and Hidetada's secondary role at Osaka was certainly a consequence of it.

Ieyasu died in 1616, and Hidetada retired in 1622 to make way for his son Iemitsu (1603–51). Only one armed conflict disturbed Iemitsu's reign, but this was the very serious Shimabara Rebellion of 1637–38. Driven to despair by the tyranny of the daimyō Matsukura Shigemasa, the population of the Amakusa Islands and the Shimabara peninsula rose in revolt. The movement very rapidly acquired a Christian coloration, which only added to the determination and fanaticism shown by the rebels, who inflicted a series of embarrassing defeats upon units of the Shogun's army sent to deal with them. They were eventually overcome after a long siege of the dilapidated Hara castle, but the repercussions were to be felt for decades to come. Under Tokugawa Iemitsu Japan was deliberately cut off from all contact with Catholic Europe; while the daimyō were further controlled using devices that took Ieyasu's redistribution of fiefs to its final form. This was the essence of Tokugawa control. It involved a balance of power between the bakufu (Shogunate) and the han (the daimyō's own territories) in political and military terms.

The administration of the Tokugawa regime was provided by Ieyasu's fudai and hatamoto. The fudai were the daimyō who had long been his most trusted vassals and had supported him at Sekigahara. They received stipends of 10,000 koku and above for their services. With the establishment of the Tokugawa peace the term 'hatamoto' gradually changed from meaning the household troops who served under Ieyasu's standard to a defined tier of those who administered the affairs of the nation in peace and, if ever it again became necessary, in war. The hatamoto received a stipend of between 100 and 9,500 koku and were entitled to at least one audience with the Shogun. Beneath them ranked the yoriki, otherwise known as gokenin (housemen), although there was a certain overlap of stipends and duties with the hatamoto. Below the yoriki ranks were the ashigaru, the lowest-ranking samurai, who were known within the Tokugawa army as dôshin.

Under conditions of peace the word 'samurai' also acquired a less specific meaning, as was to be discovered in 1872, when, prior to abolishing the han, the new Meiji government required all the daimyō to provide a return of their populations by class. Distinguishing samurai from non-samurai proved to be an extremely difficult task. In some han ashigaru had been regarded as samurai; in others they were not. There was also the problem of samurai servants and the rōnin who had found employment with daimyō. In desperation one han's officials tried to define a samurai as a man who wore swords, until they discovered just how many people in their han carried weapons.

Within the Tokugawa Shogunate, where matters were better regulated, the hatamoto, yoriki and dôshin made up its standing army and were theoretically required to be fully battle-ready at any time. Just as in the age of real wars, a hatamoto's stipend translated directly into the number of men and their weapons that he was required to supply for the Tokugawa army. The earlier recruitment schedules were modified in 1616 and 1633 to take account of the continued peace and the financial status of the hatamoto. In 1649, a good ten years after the Shimabara Rebellion, a new schedule was issued which remained in effect throughout the whole of the Tokugawa Period. It is illustrated in Table 2, and may be regarded as the final evolution of the kokudaka system for creating samurai armies.



**Table 2: the 1649 schedule for the Tokugawa army**

In 1649 the schedule for supplying troops to the Tokugawa army based on the kokudaka system took the final form that it would retain for the whole of the Tokugawa hegemony. These figures apply to those below fudai daimyō rank, i.e. hatamoto and yoriki.

| Stipend<br>(koku) | Total | Arquebusiers | Archers | Spearman | Foot<br>samurai | Mounted<br>samurai | Servants | Flags |
|-------------------|-------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|----------|-------|
| 200               | 5     |              |         | 1        | 1               |                    | 3        |       |
| 250               | 6     |              |         | 1        | 1               |                    | 4        |       |
| 300               | 7     |              |         | 1        | 1               |                    | 5        |       |
| 400               | 9     |              |         | 1        | 2               |                    | 6        |       |
| 500               | 11    |              | 1       | 1        | 2               |                    | 7        |       |
| 600               | 13    | 1            | 1       | 1        | 3               |                    | 7        |       |
| 700               | 15    | 1            | 1       | 2        | 4               |                    | 7        |       |
| 800               | 17    | 1            | 1       | 2        | 4               |                    | 7        |       |
| 900               | 19    | 1            | 1       | 2        | 5               |                    | 10       |       |
| 1,000             | 21    | 1            | 1       | 2        | 5               |                    | 12       |       |
| 1,100             | 23    | 1            | 1       | 3        | 5               |                    | 13       |       |
| 1,200             | 25    | 1            | 1       | 3        | 6               |                    | 14       |       |
| 1,300             | 27    | 1            | 1       | 3        | 6               |                    | 16       |       |
| 1,400             | 28    | 1            | 1       | 3        | 7               |                    | 17       |       |
| 1,500             | 30    | 2            | 1       | 3        | 7               |                    | 17       |       |
| 1,600             | 31    | 2            | 1       | 3        | 8               |                    | 18       |       |
| 1,700             | 33    | 2            | 1       | 4        | 8               |                    | 18       |       |
| 1,800             | 35    | 2            | 1       | 4        | 8               |                    | 20       |       |
| 1,900             | 36    | 2            | 1       | 4        | 8               |                    | 21       |       |
| 2,000             | 38    | 2            | 1       | 5        | 8               |                    | 22       |       |
| 3,000             | 56    | 3            | 2       | 5        | 8               | 2                  | 36       |       |
| 4,000             | 79    | 5            | 2       | 10       | 9               | 3                  | 57       |       |
| 5,000             | 103   | 5            | 3       | 10       | 9               | 5                  | 71       | 2     |
| 6,000             | 127   | 10           | 5       | 10       | 10              | 5                  | 87       | 2     |
| 7,000             | 148   | 15           | 10      | 10       | 11              | 6                  | 96       | 2     |
| 8,000             | 171   | 15           | 10      | 20       | 12              | 7                  | 107      | 2     |
| 9,000             | 192   | 15           | 10      | 20       | 14              | 8                  | 125      | 2     |
| 10,000            | 235   | 20           | 10      | 30       | 16              | 10                 | 149      | 3     |

Yet even though the Tokugawa family now owned a quarter of the arable land of Japan and were served by the nearest thing to a 'national army' that had existed since the invasion of Korea, this did not mean that the other daimyō had been disarmed – far from it. They were in fact required to maintain armies of their own and at their own expense to augment the Shogun's own forces. Should any of their number be misguided enough to rebel, or any foreign nation be presumptive enough to invade, then these submissive vassals would fight for the Shogun.

To further discourage any notion of opposition to the Tokugawa regime Ieyasu's successors introduced and refined the Sankin Kōtai (Alternate Attendance System). The daimyō's wives and children lived in the Shogun's capital of Edo, while the daimyō themselves alternated their residences year by year between Edo and their own castle towns. This annual change of location



A samurai attacks two peasant warriors during the siege of Hara castle in 1638. The contrast in equipment is very marked, and in the rear we see severed limbs that bear eloquent testament to the fierce fighting in the last of the rebellions against Tokugawa rule.



required the daimyō to march in one direction or the other at the head of an impressive and deliberately expensive army in full combat readiness, supplied, armed and costumed according to precise regulations that took the concept of supplying retainers according to income to a new level of wallet-emptying splendour. This combination of a large-scale hostage system and a ruinously costly schedule of army expenditure, both of which were monitored by a wide-reaching network of Tokugawa spies – the successors to the battlefield metsuke – helped maintain the iron hand of the Tokugawa peace.

The Shogun's standing army under Tokugawa Iemitsu retained the organization it had assumed under Ieyasu and Hidetada, which was in turn derived from Ieyasu's younger days in Mikawa. Its structure is summarized in the diagram on page 85. Like all daimyō, Ieyasu had his elite Horse Guards, the largest group being the Oban (Great Guard) that could be sent rapidly to any trouble spot. Founded in 1592, it originally consisted of five kumi, raised to ten in 1615 and to 12 in 1632. Each company bore a different coloured flag sashimono in a design of a disc on a plain background. The Shoinban (Body Guard) had responsibility for defending the person of the Shogun. The members of its ten kumi wore horo. The Koshoban (Inner Guard) were in charge of the defence of Edo Castle. There were six kumi who wore flag sashimono. The Kōjunin (Escort Guard) were effectively Foot Guards, although they were regarded as being inferior to the four elite Horse Guards units. The okachi kashira commanded the 'line infantry' regiments of samurai, whose members were the yoriki. The doshin filled the ranks of the specialized ashigaru squads.

Little was to change in the Tokugawa army for the next 250 years. In 1643 an additional guard unit of six companies called the Shinban (New Guard) was raised. Two further companies were to be added in 1724. The New Guard assisted in the defence of Edo castle and also served as advance units when the Shogun made visits outside the castle. Yet the New Guard, like the rest of the Tokugawa army, never saw any fighting. As their martial skills declined through inactivity scholars ranted in vain when poverty-stricken hatamoto tried to augment their insufficient stipends by part-time jobs. Yet not only were the traditional Japanese martial arts being ignored. Military technology in Europe and elsewhere was leaving Japan far behind, a worrying fact known to the Tokugawa hierarchy through information supplied by the Dutch traders. When Japan finally entered the modern world in the 19th century its armed forces were among the first institutions to be reformed. The days of samurai armies were over.

# Chronology

|      |                                                          |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1467 | Onin War begins.                                         |
| 1477 | Onin War officially ends; fighting spreads to provinces. |
| 1493 | The Hōjō capture Izu province.                           |
| 1495 | The Hōjō capture Odawara.                                |
| 1512 | The Hōjō capture Kamakura.                               |
| 1516 | Siege of Arai.                                           |
| 1524 | The Hōjō capture Edo (modern Tokyo).                     |
| 1536 | Takeda Shingen's first battle at Un no kuchi.            |
| 1537 | First battle of Konōdai.                                 |
| 1542 | Siege of Toda; first battle of Azukizaka.                |
| 1543 | Arrival of Europeans in Japan.                           |
| 1545 | Night battle of Kawagoe.                                 |
| 1548 | Battle of Uedahara.                                      |
| 1549 | Arquebuses used at Kajiki.                               |
| 1553 | First battle of Kawanakajima.                            |
| 1554 | Volley firing used at Muraki.                            |
| 1555 | Battle of Miyajima; second battle of Kawanakajima.       |
| 1557 | Third battle of Kawanakajima.                            |
| 1560 | Battle of Okehazama.                                     |
| 1561 | Fourth battle of Kawanakajima.                           |
| 1563 | Second battle of Azukizaka.                              |
| 1568 | Oda Nobunaga enters Kyōto.                               |
| 1569 | Battle of Mimasetoge.                                    |
| 1570 | Battle of Anegawa; battle of Imayama.                    |
| 1571 | Destruction of Mount Hiei by Nobunaga.                   |
| 1572 | Battle of Mikata ga Hara.                                |
| 1573 | Death of Takeda Shingen.                                 |
| 1574 | Siege of Nagashima.                                      |
| 1575 | Battle of Nagashino.                                     |
| 1576 | Building of Azuchi castle.                               |
| 1578 | Battle of Mimigawa; battle of Kōzuki.                    |
| 1579 | Siege of Miki.                                           |
| 1580 | Surrender of Ishiyama Honganji.                          |
| 1581 | Siege of Tottori.                                        |
| 1582 | Murder of Oda Nobunaga and battle of Yamazaki.           |
| 1583 | Battle of Shizugatake.                                   |
| 1584 | Battles of Komaki; battle of Nagakute.                   |
| 1585 | Invasion of Shikoku.                                     |
| 1586 | Invasion of Kyūshū begins.                               |
| 1588 | Sword Hunt instituted.                                   |
| 1590 | Siege of Odawara.                                        |
| 1591 | Unification of Japan completed.                          |
| 1592 | First invasion of Korea.                                 |
| 1593 | Japanese withdrawal from Korea.                          |
| 1597 | Second invasion of Korea.                                |
| 1598 | Death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi; Korean War ends.            |
| 1600 | Battle of Sekigahara.                                    |
| 1603 | Tokugawa Ieyasu becomes Shogun.                          |
| 1609 | Shimazu invade Ryūkyū.                                   |
| 1614 | Winter Campaign of Osaka.                                |



|             |                                       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1615</b> | Summer Campaign of Osaka.             |
| <b>1616</b> | Death of Tokugawa Ieyasu.             |
| <b>1638</b> | Shimabara Rebellion is defeated.      |
| <b>1639</b> | Closed-country edict.                 |
| <b>1649</b> | Final schedule for the Tokugawa army. |

# Glossary

|               |                                                               |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| ashigaru      | foot soldier                                                  |
| bugyō         | military administrator, commissioner or general staff officer |
| fudai         | hereditary retainer                                           |
| ichizoku      | relative                                                      |
| ikusa metsuke | army inspector                                                |
| kami          | deity in Japanese religion                                    |
| kan           | unit of monetary wealth                                       |
| kandaka       | system for assessing wealth of rice fields                    |
| karō          | senior retainer or elder                                      |
| kashin        | retainer                                                      |
| kashindan     | retainer band                                                 |
| kinju         | personal retainer                                             |
| kogashira     | officer directly in charge of a weapons squad                 |
| kokka         | a daimyō's domains                                            |
| koku          | a measure of rice                                             |
| kokudaka      | assessment of fields based on productivity                    |
| koshō         | young warrior equivalent to a page or a squire                |
| kuni          | ancient province of Japan                                     |
| mon           | family crest or badge                                         |
| monogashira   | captain of military unit                                      |
| monomi        | scout                                                         |
| rōshin        | elder or senior                                               |
| samurai       | Japanese knight                                               |
| shū           | company or troop                                              |
| shugo         | provincial governor under the Shogun                          |
| sonae         | division in army                                              |
| teppō         | arquebus                                                      |
| teppōgumi     | arquebus units                                                |
| tozama        | outer lords in a retainer band                                |
| yamashiro     | castle on a mountain                                          |
| yari          | spear                                                         |
| yarigumi      | spear unit                                                    |
| yokome        | inspector, like a metsuke                                     |



The jinbaori was a surcoat worn by senior officers in an army such as the bugyō and the taishō. This particularly fine reproduction features a cross-shaped mon (family crest).



The rear ranks of the hatamoto of the Matsuura daimyō show various standards and weaponry.



# Bibliography and further reading

Much of the technical data has been drawn from the multi-volume illustrated series *Rekishi Gunzō*, published by Gakken in Tokyo. Some of the primary source material referred to here may be found in translation in my book *The Samurai Sourcebook* (Cassell, 1998). For two thorough case studies of battles see my *Nagashino 1575* (2000), *Kawanakajima 1553–1564* (2003) and *Osaka 1615* (2006) in the Osprey Campaign series. Important Japanese sources are two works by Yoshihiko Sasama entitled *Ashigaru no Seikatsu* (1969) and *Buke Senjin Saho Shōsei* (1968). The first is the standard work on the history of ashigaru and contains long sections from *Zōhyō Monogatari*. The second, which is concerned with the entire samurai class, also contains much from *Zōhyō Monogatari*, and other essays and primary source material on ashigaru. There is much on battles in two recent volumes in the series *Senryaku, senjutsu, heiki jiten*. Volume 2 *Nihon Sengoku hen* includes many drawings of samurai in action, while Volume 6 *Nihon Johaku hen* concentrates on sieges. I also acknowledge two more valuable works by Sasama: *Nihon Kassen Zuten* (1997) and *Nihon Senjin Saho Jiten* (2000). Each contains material published in his other works, but are both illustrated with fine drawings and diagrams.



Uesugi Kenshin gazes defiantly across the Saigawa at the second battle of Kawanakajima in 1555. Note the Uesugi mon of love birds on his flag.



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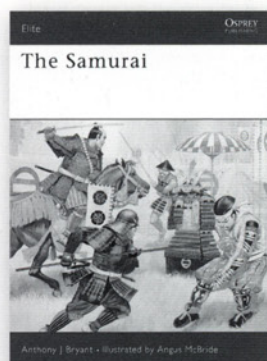
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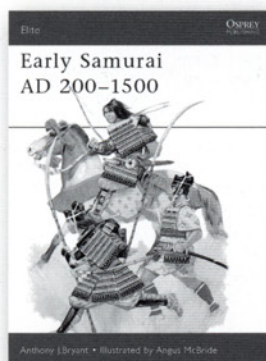
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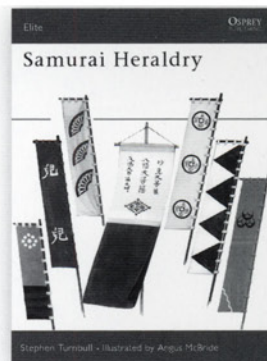
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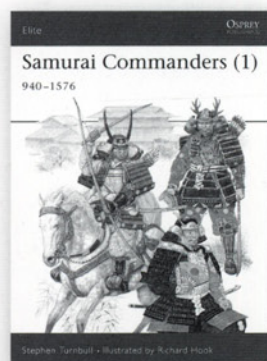
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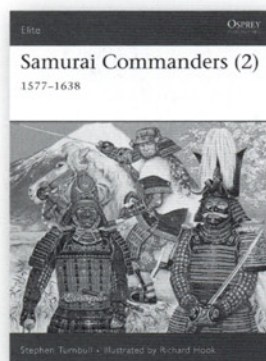
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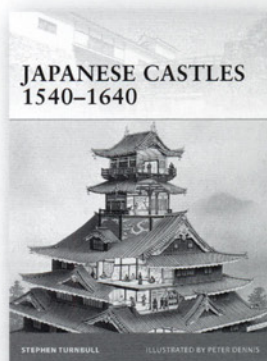
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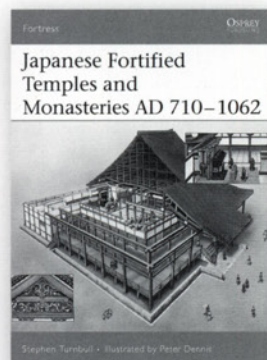
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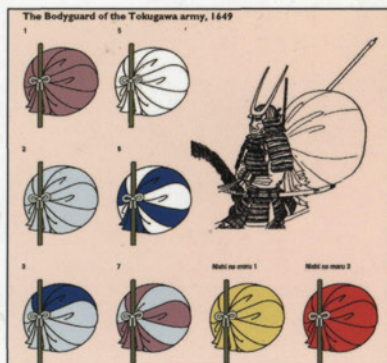
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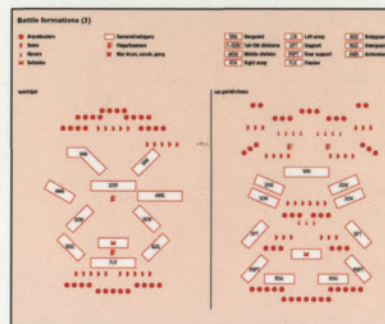
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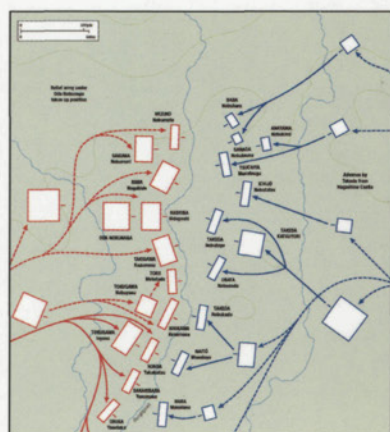
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